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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes research on the problems of young adolescent latchkey children and describes 18 programs designed to address their needs. There is growing consensus that young adolescents (10 to 15 years of age), as well as elementary school children, may be at risk when left on a regular basis in unsupervised settings. Children in sibling- or self-care are susceptible to the development of anti-social behaviors, to accident or injury, and to sexual activity or abuse. Time out of school can provide valuable opportunities for enriching educational and recreational experiences, but public and private funding shortages severely restrict access, necessitating public policy initiatives. Among criteria for successful programs for young adolescents are the following elements: (1) physical activity; (2) diversity of experience; (3) self-exploration and definition; (4) positive interaction with peers and adults; (5) competence and achievement; (6) structure and clear limits; (7) creative expression; and (8) meaningful participation. The report reviews what parents and children say they want in programs, and finds the need for new methods, strategies, and intergenerational relationships. The programs profiled address the need for meaningful community involvement and provide essential peer group activities for participants. A list of 13 references is appended. (AF)

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I. Overview

Traditionally, attention to the problems of latch-key children has been focused on the supervision of elementary school children before and after school and on the days that schools are closed. Yet, there is a growing consensus that young adolescents, between the ages of 10 and 15, may also be at risk when left on a regular basis in unsupervised settings. Many parents and professionals feel that young teens, who are not engaged in meaningful activities, may be more susceptible to peer pressure and therefore more likely to engage in delinquent behaviors or become victims or perpetrators of crime. A study by Steinberg (1986) of 10 to 15 year olds in Wisconsin found that the further children are removed from adult supervision, the more susceptible they are to pressure from peers to engage in anti-social, negative behaviors. Those most susceptible were children who were "hanging out" in the neighborhood after school was over and whose parents did not know their whereabouts. A 1982 study by the Center for Early Adolescence(CEA) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Farel, 1983), which surveyed nearly 1,000 parents at 19 sites across the country on their preferences and needs for after-school activities for their 10 to 14 year olds, found that parents are worried about their children coming under the bad influence of peers, which may result in drinking, abusing drugs, stealing, fighting with other children, being beaten up, or engaging in gang activity.

Other researchers feel that concerns raised regarding the impact of self-care on younger children (ages 5 to 10) may also apply to young adolescents. These concerns include the extent to which young adolescents may be in danger of victimization (i.e., at risk of physical, sexual or psychological abuse by older children or adults) and at increased risk of injury from accidents. The CEA parent survey found that parents' greatest concerns about the interval between the time school ends and 6:00 PM were around safety issues. Parents worried most about sports' injuries, fires in the home and traffic accidents. They felt that the unsupervised neighborhood play, in which most children are involved, is neither safe nor constructive. Parents expressed fear that their children might become victims of sexual exploitation, drug pushers and robbers if in the streets or if at home alone.

Reports from the federal Agency for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) study in Virginia and Minnesota (Applied Management Sciences, 1982) indicate that between one-third of Virginia parents and almost two-thirds of Minnesota families were in fear of accidents occurring when children were in self- or sibling care. Eight to nine percent of these families had experienced accidents when their children were alone. A more recent study (Hedin et al, 1986) of parents and students in grades K-8 in the Greater Minneapolis area, indicates that parents worry far more than do their children about the after-school hours. As in the CEA and ACYF studies, parents' first concern was about injuries to their children (80%). The next most frequent concern was watching too much T.V. and getting involved with the wrong kinds of friends (42% each), being kidnapped (40%), and being sexually abused (39%). These concerns were fairly uniform across all parents irrespective of the age of child, home location, socioeconomic status and family type.

In addition, there is some evidence that children left to fend for themselves may experience loneliness, be frightened, or worried, which may constrain their psychosocial development and lead to problems during their school years and beyond. According to the findings in the Greater Minneapolis Survey (Hedin et al, 1986), elementary and junior high school students have different concerns about the after-school hours. In response to a closed-ended questionnaire, getting hurt, being kidnapped, getting involved with the wrong kinds of friends, getting into fights, and being abused all ranked higher for 4th through 6th graders than for junior high students. For the older students being bored, wasting time, and not finishing chores and homework were of more concern. Girls have significantly more fears than boys: and urban youth have more fears than young adolescents in the suburbs. Elementary children in minority, single-parent families had the highest rates of concern (30% to 55%) regarding physical safety and survival. When students discussed worries and concerns in a group setting, the overriding fear was of someone breaking into their home and robbing and/or hurting them.

For young adolescents charged with the care of younger siblings, the premature granting of responsibility may add further stress affecting school performance and achievement as well as curtailing after-school involvement in activities which encourage constructive, social interaction and skill development. The CEA parents' study corroborates these findings. Parents expressed concern regarding older children having too much responsibility for younger siblings, and siblings spending too much time together unsupervised. Parents were concerned that the amount of time self-care children spend alone limits their opportunities to spend time with friends and to play outside. Parents are also concerned about the boredom many children experience and about the fact that their children may be spending too much time on the telephone, eating non-nutritious snacks and spending excessive amounts of non-constructive time watching television.

According to some researchers, there are indications that as more and more women enter the labor force, the absence of adult figures in the home during the day and the general lack of regular adult supervision during the out-of-school hours may encourage premature experimentation with sex among all income levels of adolescents (Long and Long, 1988). According to another researcher, the growth in the number of latch-key children has a disturbing parallel to the growing number of young adolescents exposed to drug and alcohol experimentation and abuse (Zigler, 1986).

In a recent study, (Long and Long, 1988), data collected from 362 randomly selected young adolescents showed that a significant minority (20%) were sexually active in their own homes during the hours when they were on their own. While the data did not indicate that latch-key children were significantly more involved in sexual behaviors than youngsters under continuous adult supervision, the data did show that sexual activity increased proportionally with the amount of time adolescents spent in self-care. The data also showed that latch-key adolescents residing in single parent households were more likely both to engage in sexual activity and to have sexual intercourse while their parent was away than teens from two-parent homes. Forty percent of teens from single-parent families were sexually active while their parent was away. The study also showed that teenage sexual

activity increased in the summer when teens were left to care for themselves, eight to ten hours per day.

According to Long and Long, latch-key children are more likely to find their sexual development influenced by peers, older siblings, television movies, etc., than by their parents. The long hours alone make these youngsters more sexually vulnerable and provide them with increased opportunities to participate in sexual activity. In light of the increase in unwanted pregnancies, births, and sexually communicated diseases including AIDS, the authors urge increased attention by parents and schools to the need for providing structured after-school and summer activities. Findings from the Ounce of Prevention Funds' Heart to Heart Survey on sexual abuse as reported by teen parents (TEC Networks, 1988), show that of the 445 teens questioned, 271 reported sexual abuse and indicated that the first occurrence of all forms of sexual abuse was at 11.5 years. While many females are abused early in life, experiences are most common during early adolescence.

A recently released survey by the Bureau of the Census on the After School Care of School Age Children (Bureau of the Census, 1987) lends further support to concerns regarding the large numbers of young adolescents left on their own. Although younger children are left in self-care in relatively small numbers, by age 10 some 16 percent of children with full-time working mothers are in self- or non-adult care; by age 13 this figure increases to 25 percent. In other words, during 1984 one out of every four of 1.5 million thirteen year olds in the United States with a full-time working mother was in non-adult care on a weekly, if not a daily, basis.

Other studies indicate that the figures for young adolescents in self- or sibling care may be much higher. A study conducted by Arthur Emlin (1982) of the employees of three major Washington, D.C. firms indicates that among 9 to 11 year olds, 45 percent are in self- or sibling care; among 12 to 14 year olds, the figure rises to 68 percent. A survey of employees in downtown Los Angeles in 1984 (United Way, 1984) indicates that 76 percent of the respondents' children aged 10 to 13 were in self-care. Medrich (Medrich et al, 1982), in an intensive study of the time use of Oakland, California children ages 11 and 12 during the out-of-school hours found that in 30 percent of single-parent and 23 percent of two-parent families, no adult was home with the child after school. In households in which the mother was employed full-time and no younger children were present, 57 percent of the 11 and 12 year olds were left without adult supervision.

In the Minneapolis study (Hedin et al, 1986), according to the urban children in grades 4 through 6 (10 to 12 year olds), 50 to 60 percent were home without adults at least one day per week; 30 to 40 percent, three to five days per week. There were clear differences by race and gender: Indian children are the least likely to be home without adults; Black males are the most likely; and boys are more likely than girls to be unsupervised. Among junior high school students in seventh and eighth grades, 75 to 80 percent of both urban and suburban students report being home alone at least one day per week; while 35 to 50 percent report being without adult supervision three to five days per week. As with the younger children, boys are considerably more likely than girls to be left unsupervised.

While these studies indicate that large numbers of young adolescents are in fact being left on their own, we must also ask whether this practice accurately reflects what parents feel is best for their children. In the Chapel Hill study, parents from diverse racial, geographic and sociodemographic backgrounds were asked, among other questions, how old a child should be before he/she did not need adult supervision during the after-school hours. Not surprisingly, approximately 90 percent of the parents who responded indicated that 9 to 11 year olds require adult supervision. Seventy-three percent of the parents felt that 12 year olds still needed adult supervision. Recent census data indicate that among 9 to 11 year olds with mothers in the labor force, 13 percent are in non-adult care and this proportion rises to 16 percent when mothers are employed full time. These data indicate that parents may not have access to the financial or programmatic resources necessary for securing their preferred arrangements. Generally the large majority of parents (85%) in the CEA study agree that by age 16 adult supervision is unnecessary. Between the ages of 12 and 15 there are differing opinions based on the sex of the child, race, level of income and the location of the home.

Parents appear to feel that boys are able to be in unsupervised arrangements at an earlier age than girls. Fifty percent of the parents who responded think supervision is unnecessary by age thirteen and a half for boys but girls must reach age 14 before half of the survey parents feel this way. This half-year spread between the sexes begins at age twelve and a half and continues until about fifteen and a half, disappearing by age 16 when 85 percent or more parents feel supervision is unnecessary. Race also appears to play a role in parents' perception of the need for supervision. Beginning at age 9 and continuing through age 16, Black families are more likely than white families to feel that their children require supervision. For example at age 12, more than twice as many white families (26%) feel children can manage on their own compared to 11 percent of Black families. Location of home (suburban, urban, rural) differences are less marked, but as expected slightly higher percentages of suburban families feel children ages 11 to 14 can be on their own than those in urban or rural settings. Somewhat surprisingly, parents in rural settings appear slightly more reluctant to do without supervision for children ages 10 to 15, despite research findings that show children in rural settings to be at lower risk than those in urban settings. Low-income families also appear to be more hesitant to agree that supervision is unnecessary and this is particularly noticeable at age 12. Only 17 percent of low-income families with twelve year olds feel that adult supervision is unnecessary as compared to 27 to 30 percent of middle and high-income families. This discrepancy is noted again at age 15 and 16 perhaps reflecting the greater environmental risks faced by low-income, minority young adolescents.

In light of these findings, we must not only continue to examine what harm is being done by these arrangements, but we must also move beyond this question and ask what opportunities are being lost, particularly for low-income youth who are less likely to have chances to participate in after-school activities. Perhaps it is the spectre of lost opportunity which is most disturbing. The time out of school could be used to provide valuable

opportunities for enriching educational and recreational experiences.

Yet, despite indicators of the growing number of young adolescents who might be helped by participating in organized activities during their out-of-school hours, both public and private funding for youth programs is at a premium. State and local tax caps, the insurance crisis, decreased federal, state and local spending have all had a negative impact on the quantity and quality of programs available for this age group. This is especially true of community resources such as neighborhood recreation centers, libraries, school sports programs, etc., which have traditionally provided after-school services free of charge and thus are more readily accessible to low-income adolescents. Few parents are able to find well-supervised, low-cost programs that are accessible to young teens and provide activities that serve their interests and needs. As a result, many young adolescents are being left aimless and uninvolved in their communities. As public funds are cut and as fees are imposed or raised, we also face the danger of institutionalizing a two track, economically-segregated youth development system. This issue of limited financial access more than any other issue places the problem in the public policy arena. The problem is further exacerbated by the rehabilitative thrust of many federal categorical programs. These programs are chiefly concerned with "problem" adolescents (i.e., delinquents, runaways, pregnant teens, substance abusers, etc.). Eligibility for services or program participation requires a label of deviance for behavior or status and are narrowly focused; few programs have a preventive thrust.

The growing gap between need and supply, coupled with indicators of the negative impact of the self-care experience for some teens, is causing growing concern. Researchers, parents, and practitioners are becoming aware that we as a society may be pursuing a course which may result in increased future societal and individual costs. As divisions in our society become more marked, access to employment, power and status becomes more difficult. Requirements for entry into the mainstream become more stringent, making exposure to enriching experiences, to a variety of environments and to adults particularly important to young adolescents. This is especially true for inner city, minority youth whose world may be limited to a few city blocks and whose contact with adults may at best be neutral. While middle- and upper- class families use the after-school hours for music and art lessons, sports, and planned social experiences, low-income, minority youth lack access to these enrichment activities and the wise use of the after-school hours carries added value for this group. At a time when this age cohort will constitute a smaller proportion of our population than was true in the past, our investment in each young adolescent becomes an increasingly important investment in our future.

The findings of the Minneapolis study (Hedin et al, 1986) further substantiate these observations. The survey found that while only about 15 to 20 percent of early adolescents (9 to 13 year olds) overall wanted to increase their level of participation in after-school programs, one subgroup expressed twice as much interest. These were urban, minority 4th through 6th graders from one-parent families who were found to be less frequently involved (44%) in after-school programs and activities than their suburban counterparts (63%). Their parents were also more enthusiastic; overall 45% of urban

parents wanted their children to be more involved compared with 33% of suburban parents. The highest interest in increased participation among parents was from single, urban, white parents of low-middle income with children in all age categories.

If participation in organized after-school programs is of importance to at least some children and parents, we must then ask what are the major perceived barriers to participation. In one of the few studies to ask this question, the Minneapolis study (Hedin et al, 1986), Hedin notes that the barriers to participation are perceived very differently by parents and children. To children, four features were critical to joining a program. From most to least children want: 1) their friends in the program; 2) program activities and experiences that were of interest; 3) adults in charge that were child centered; and 4) some autonomy within the program. If these four features are not present, then the pull of competing responsibilities and interests are stronger than that of the program. It is interesting to note that in group discussions a fifth variable, fear of failure, was identified by students. The only element parents shared with their children was with regard to the content of activities. Among parents, three other factors were of major importance: reasonable cost, ease of transportation, and staff having similar values about child-rearing. Each of these elements are traditionally mentioned as potential barriers to day care utilization, irrespective of age group. Children's desire to participate was mentioned as moderately important by parents of children in grades 4 through 8.

Given the importance placed by both children and parents on program content, activities and experiences, we need to ask what criteria should be used in developing programs for this age group. In addition, we need to look at studies which have interviewed parents and children as to what they say these programs should include. Finally, we turn to some program models which meet the criteria for positive program development and which place particular emphasis on serving low-income young adolescents.

II. Criteria for Good Programs

The tension in designing good programs for young adolescents is between creating programs which encourage overly prolonged dependency and those which promote premature independence. At their best, good programs are able to walk this fine line and help young teens adapt well to society. At the heart of designing good programs for this age group is recognizing and accommodating the variability and sequencing of adolescent physical, social, intellectual and emotional growth and the complex interweaving of individual maturity with family structure, neighborhood safety and community resources. The large number of variables which must be taken into consideration precludes simple and uniform programmatic solutions. While some young adolescents may cope well in situations which provide a great deal of freedom, others are uneasy and become frightened or angry with the premature granting of freedom and responsibility. Young adolescents are vulnerable to the negative influences of their environments but they are also vulnerable to positive influences. Environments which offer realistic expectations, caring relationships with adults and opportunities for constructive and enjoyable activities with peers

will increase the chances for young adolescents to realize the best in themselves.

The Center for Early Adolescence lists the following qualities needed for successful programs for young adolescents: physical activity, diversity of experience, self-exploration and definition, positive interaction with peers and adults, competence and achievement, structure and clear limits, creative expression, and meaningful participation. Programs with these qualities support the adolescents emerging sense of usefulness, belonging and power. The Center has also developed program assessment criteria which are divided into two groups: the non-negotiable criteria are those which all programs must have if they are to meet the needs of young adolescents; and negotiable criteria which good programs serving all age groups should have in order to be more responsive to parents, staff and the community. The non-negotiable criteria mandate that a program must: be safe; be supervised; have clean facilities; be caring; have a clearly defined mission; be responsive to its local community; meet at least four of the key developmental needs of young adolescents, two of which must be structure and clear limits and positive interaction with peers and adults; and be staffed by youth workers who are knowledgeable about and respectful of participants' culture, language, and ethnic background. Programs which adhere to these criteria will help ensure that young teens feel more positive about themselves and their future and will decrease the likelihood that they will engage in activities which reduce their chances to lead meaningful and productive adult lives.

III. What Parents and Children Say They Want In Programs

A 1984 survey, of how young adolescents from a suburban Massachusetts town spend their after-school time and how they would like to spend their after-school time, found that while recreational activities represented their first choice, young adolescents were also interested in informational workshops and leadership activities (Holak, 1987). In analyzing the results of the survey, the author found that at least 20 percent of the respondents were interested in being part of a committee to plan activities for their peer group. Flexible hours were important for at least a quarter of those surveyed; activities on Friday and Saturday evenings were of particular interest.

In the Minneapolis study (Hedin, 1986), while children expressed only modest interest in after-school programming, they wanted to learn about and participate in a wide variety of extra-curricular skills and knowledge, recreational activities, and personal and social skills. There were clear differences in interests by age, urbanicity, and gender which suggest that programs for this age group need to be highly targeted in order to be successful. Among the options for program offerings explored in the survey, it was found that suburban boys were the least interested and urban girls were the most interested in almost every option. Not unexpectedly, for almost every curricular area, a larger percentage of parents than children expressed interest. Although the rank order varied, both parents and children were interested in virtually the same items. For example, in the category of personal and social skills, parents were two to three times more interested than their children in having their children learn how to make close friends,

in getting along with parents, and developing skills for being home alone. It is interesting to note that developing skills for being home alone received the highest ranking from elementary school boys and girls; more than 40 percent of the fourth through sixth grade girls and 30 percent of the boys in these grades expressed interest in this area.

The Minneapolis study concludes that while children and early adolescents may have only modest interest in increased participation in after-school programs, they do want to increase their knowledge and skills in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The problem then is not a lack of interest on the part of young people, but finding an appropriate vehicle for delivering such experiences. New methods, new strategies and new kinds of relationships between children and the adults in charge need to be designed. A number of programs have been developed to meet these challenges. The following section highlights the unique approaches of several of the most promising programs.

The Programs [1]

The programs profiled below have diverse sponsorship, facilities and funding sources. They vary in location and in program emphasis, but each program has as its goal the creation of a safe, caring place where young adolescents are provided a chance to expand their horizons, develop new skills and assume increased responsibility for themselves and others in their communities.

While each of the programs described below addresses the needs of low-income, young adolescents some programs have program activities or a unique approach to serving the needs of their clients. Plaza De La Raza in Los Angeles and Arts, Inc. in New York City use art, writing and photography among other methods to encourage and develop pride in minority cultures. The Girls Club of Pittsfield is one of five Girls Clubs experimenting with enhancing math and science skills in young adolescents.

Several of the programs include components which help young adolescents experience and learn about the world of work and experiment with different vocational choices. The West End Neighborhood House in Wilmington, Delaware offers groups of teens the chance to prepare dinner each night for other youngsters and staff under the supervision of a trained cook. The Dorchester Youth Collaborative's Prevention Club provides opportunities for paid work for small carpentry and repair jobs and yard work. The Girls Club of Dallas provides opportunities to experience real jobs through a mentor program which operates during school vacations and through a summer business venture. The Early Adolescent Helper Program in New York City provides adolescents with the opportunity to participate in caring for preschoolers and young, school-age children. Only two programs, the Carol Robertson Center for Learning in Chicago and the Bridge Fund in Boston offer participants the continuous

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[1]The programs included in this report were part of a study conducted in 1987 for the Children's Defense Fund (Children's Defense Fund, 1987).

supervision that many parents claim they want for their young adolescents. Both of these programs operate in the traditional mode of after-school programs for younger children, while at the same time providing age-appropriate activities to enhance growth and development in the young adolescent.

Each of the programs reviewed addresses the needs of young, low-income adolescents for meaningful community involvement and each provides peer group activities which are important to young adolescents. Many of the programs are committed to developing work-related skills and work experience which will help young adolescents develop a more positive view of themselves and develop confidence in their own futures.

Program Profiles

Plaza De La Raza
School of Performing and Visual Arts
3540 North Mission Road
Los Angeles, Ca 90031
(213) 223-2475

Plaza De La Raza, which literally means "a place of the people", is a multi-faceted organization including a community center, a park, a museum, a gallery, a theater, a gathering place for parents and young people, and a School of Performing and Visual Arts (SPVA). Plaza is an educational center which employs the fine arts, drama, music, dance and the visual arts to communicate Hispanic culture to the greater Los Angeles community and to preserve the unique cultural contributions of people of Hispanic descent. Plaza De La Raza carries out its dual mission by conducting professionally taught classes in these disciplines for all age groups, grade school through adults, by serving as a resource center sponsoring workshops for artists and educators from across the country and abroad, and by scheduling cultural events and exhibits for the general public throughout the year.

The School of Performing and Visual Arts was originally founded in 1972 by two artists who hoped to make Mexican-Americans proud of their heritage through art forms. Today it has expanded its vision to encourage artistic development in all forms. For example, folkloric (Mexican folk dancing) dancing now takes its place among ballet, jazz, and modern dance. The program is open to any student who has talent or interest in the arts. Most classes are free of charge to "students who reside in certain sections of Los Angeles, and who meet low and moderate income requirements." There is a modest fee for a small number of classes, but some students can work in the office or on presentations in exchange for these classes.

Presently the program operates from 3:30 PM to 8:30 PM Monday-Friday, and 8:30 AM to 4:40 PM Saturday. The program is coed and 90% Hispanic. Approximately 300 of the 450 to 500 low-income youth served are aged 10 to 15. SPVA is funded by the City of Los Angeles, California Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, and by memberships fees from individuals, families, businesses, and organizations. The current budget is $204,000. Since the city has given Plaza De La Raza a long-term lease on the park property, and the buildings have been paid for with grant monies and contributions, budget funds go directly to support program operations.

SPVA offers more than 80 classes in dance, music, theater, media, visual arts, and Mexican crafts. All but nine courses are open to 10 to 15 year olds. Many of the classes are open to young people and adults, encouraging intergenerational projects. The courses are designed to provide students with

the knowledge, skills, and opportunities that will:

- allow students to develop their artistic skills and talents.
- provide a means for personal development and self expression.
- enhance the quality of their cultural and intellectual lives.
- offer avenues for the appreciation and enjoyment of their creative activity.

The curriculum is continually expanding to keep pace with the contemporary world of the arts. Some recent additions are courses in the visual media, including film making and videotaping. Courses usually culminate in a performance, recital, or exhibit that is open to the public.

Most of the 25 SPVA instructors are professional artists and art educators who come from local galleries, schools, and universities. Many of the instructors are bilingual. The teachers are selected for their talent as well as their sensitivity to young people. The director works with new teachers to help them learn to interact appropriately with young adolescents. She arranges for the teachers to meet monthly to share their experiences. Faculty routinely evaluate curricula and student performance.

SPVA strives toward maintaining a sensitivity to the predominantly Hispanic Community of East Los Angeles in which it is located. Announcements and schedules are usually printed in both Spanish and English. Ethnic music, art, and dance are celebrated in classes and festivals. The school also emphasizes the importance of families. Parents are welcome at all times to speak with the staff and are encouraged to attend the twice yearly open-house and help with make-up and costumes during the special performances that students give to the community.

Each month, SPVA reports to the City of Los Angeles, in writing, and in addition, directly to a site visitor. The program also supplies the city with an analysis of participants by age, sex, socioeconomic status and residency. As the student population continues to grow, the issue of space becomes a factor in expanding programs. This factor, along with the need for increased teacher training is seen as a barrier to program expansion.

SPVA tries to accommodate both the students and the community by being responsive to the developmental needs of youngsters and by preserving and enriching the Hispanic culture of the area. The program seems to work equally well for the student who plans to pursue the arts as a career and for the student who desires only to enrich his life by studying the visual and performing arts. As the former Executive Director of the Plaza has stated: "When we lack the arts, music, the word, we tend to have our centers somehow off balance." Plaza has worked to maintain that "balance" in the lives of low income, minority youngsters in the East Los Angeles area.

Pittsfield Girls Club
165 East Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413)442-5174

The Girls Club of Pittsfield, Massachusetts encourages girls through lively and enjoyable activities to feel comfortable with their bodies, to strive for fitness and strength and to develop special talents that enhance feelings of self-worth and confidence. The club offers daily activities year round including academic remediation and enrichment activities including music, theatre, cooking, dance and arts and crafts. Recreational sports and swim instruction are also available. Teen members can participate in issue groups and a babysitting course. The club served over 1,000 youths ages one month to 19 years during the 1985-1986 school year and has an operating budget of more than $650,000, with major support from the United Way.

Thirty full-time and 10 part-time staff work directly with about 85 club members each day. The membership is both low and middle income, and approximately 6% to 7% are black and Hispanic. Club membership costs $3 per year and $15 per course which run half a year. All fees can be reduced or waived. Parents are encouraged to participate with youngsters in certain group activities and parent representatives are full members of the advisory board.

The Pittsfield Girls Club also runs the Gladys A. Bingham Children's Center, a model comprehensive coed day care program serving children from infancy to age 19. The school age child care component, serving 85 youngsters aged 5 through 12 years permits members input about scheduling, freedom of choice for activities, and work opportunities around the club. Staff provide ongoing supervision and accountability for all SACC participants, notifying parents immediately of absence from the program. The Children's Center also runs the Out-of-School Youth Program serving 70 to 90 teens ages 13 to 19. A two-third/one-third ratio of girls to boys is maintained and 50% to 60% of participants' fees are subsidized. The Out-of-School Youth Program received the 1984 Girls Clubs of America Outstanding Program award.

The Pittsfield Girls Club is one of the seven Girls Clubs in Massachusetts and New York currently involved in Operation S.M.A.R.T.. This program grew out of a recognition of the increasing importance of math and science in a technological age, and the barriers and stereotypes that have kept women from pursuing these fields. Major funding for three years of support for the early adolescent component has been awarded by the National Science Foundation. General Electric, WEEAP, Ford Foundation, IBM, and other major foundations and corporations have also provided funding. A research project to study collaborations between Girls Clubs and junior high/middle schools to increase girls' involvement in math and science is supported by the Ford Foundation. The program established in 1983, has an operating budget of $19,600 and receives assistance, coordination and support from the Girls' Clubs national office in New York City and its National Resource Center in Indianapolis. A separate advisory board which includes parents, guides the activities of Operation S.M.A.R.T.

Operation S.M.A.R.T. seeks to involve and interest girls in math and science, and to encourage their participation during the school years and as they plan their careers. The program encourages girls to explore, question, and try to figure out how things work. It's specific goals are:

- To enable Girls Clubs and other voluntary non-school organizations to offer programs in math, science, technology, and computers.
- To demonstrate how math and science can be integrated into a variety of program areas such as sports, cooking, woodworking, theater, and arts and crafts-and to help young people discover math and science concepts in everyday life.
- To provide girls with access to resources in the community that can further their interest in math and science.
- To determine how informal and formal education settings can best work together to increase girls' interest and involvement in math and science.

The Pittsfield Girls Club has worked extensively on integrating math/science concepts into all club areas. Staff members have met to raise their own consciousness about math and science and attended special programs with consultants to help them practice using scientific inquiry as an approach with children. Numerous ways of bringing science into regular program activities have been explored. For instance, geodesic domes made by the members were displayed in the lobby along with thought provoking questions about how they were made. A cooking class, "Recipe Rustlers", is intentionally designed to incorporate science, and swim instructors are encouraged to discuss water displacement.

Staff is also encouraged to set up situations that encourage children to:

- ask questions
- guess about why things work the way they do
- observe what's going on around them
- deviate from a set pattern or one right way of doing things
- speculate, even unrealistically, about what will happen next and why
- think creatively: look at things from a new and different angle
- try new things

In addition to integration of activities, a once a week structured Discovery Club is available to 11-14 year old club members who want a more specific course in these areas.

Through Operation Smart, the Pittsfield Girls Club is helping girls develop a method of scientific inquiry rather than any particular math/science content. It also encourages girls to keep full work options and avoids having them drop out of the math and science tracks in school.

The Youth Services Program
West End Neighborhood House, Inc.
710 North Lincoln Street
Wilmington, Delaware 19805
302-658-4171

The West End Neighborhood House has been in existence for 101 years and has evolved with the changing needs of the community. One-third of the population this program serves has incomes below poverty level and 40% of the families are headed by a single parent. Originally named the "Italian Reading Area", the organization provided a place for the community of Italian-speaking people to practice English language skills while enjoying recreational activities. In 1983, the center was renamed the "Neighborhood House". The current program provides a comprehensive community based support system that encourages and reinforces positive behavior in youth aged 6 to 18. It attempts to enhance youngsters' self-esteem and decision making by meeting their social, emotional, educational, and health needs.

The basic goals of the program are divided into three areas: prevention, motivation and stimulation. The program director states that, "We want to prevent school dropouts, teenage pregnancy and problems with the law, but we also want to furnish some emotional stability and continuity so these kids can build a sense of self-worth."

The program was originally funded by the Welfare Foundation and the Capitol Trust of Delaware. Current funding is provided by the United Way, and the Dupont Corporation. The operating budget of $297,105 is broken down as follows: After School and Summer Child Care for school age youth (ages 6-12), $105,580; Youth Services Program (ages 9-18), $141,575; and Tutoring Program (ages 6-18), $49,950.

Four professionals, 30 volunteers and 10 peer workers currently work with 1,100 low income, minority youth. The program serves approximately 31% of the target population. The racial composition of the participants is 80% black, 10% white and 10% Hispanic. The staff works with the youngsters in the areas of academics, team sports and various aspects of personal growth. The center is open from 2:30 PM to 9:00 PM during the school year and from 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM during the summer months.

One important aspect of the center is an after-school care program for Title XX/SSBG eligible youngsters up to age 12. This program builds in structured learning time and students are required to do homework before they can participate in social/recreational activities. If no homework is given by their teacher, then students are required to read. As many as 50 volunteer tutors are available to assist students with homework assignments. All participants are required to be in either tutoring or counseling.

Another unique feature of the center is a dinner program, funded by Dupont and the state, where teenagers learn about nutrition and prepare meals each

night for 50 to 75 other youngsters under the supervision of a trained cook. The program was developed when it was determined that many of the youngsters lived on snacks and school lunches and ate hot meals only sporadically.

An extremely popular program appealing to pre-teens as well as teens is the structured "rap sessions", in which students are grouped by age levels to select topics for discussion. Twice a week each group holds rap sessions which are moderated by staff members. Often 30 to 40 students will be waiting for their opportunity to discuss selected topics. Additional center services extend into health care areas: the administration of flu shots, cancer screening, prenatal programs, well child clinics and other services dealing with the prevention of illness.

Approximately 10% (60 youths) of the program's participants are monitored and evaluated every six months on a variety of outcomes that the center deems important. Youths participating in the tutorial component of the program are also evaluated in the areas of reading and grade point average.

Programs at the West End Neighborhood House are very "participant centered", and continual efforts are made by the staff to solicit feedback from participants in the various activities concerning their satisfaction with the services and programs offered. The staff is receptive to suggestions, and highly values input from community members.

Teen members, especially, appreciate the opportunity to be involved in the decision making process, a "family sharing" atmosphere that is very much a part of program planning. Not only are these teens involved in planning the menu for evening meals, choosing discussion topics for rap sessions, determining the fees for dances, but they are also involved in fund raising activities for special trips. During the summer students, with the assistance of the 4-H Club, grow their own vegetables in the center's garden. Students sell the harvest to local merchants to raise money for future activities.

In these ways, the West End Neighborhood Center creates a comprehensive community-based support system that is a "home-away-from-home" for young adolescents. They arrive at the center after school, spend time in structured homework or tutoring activities, participate in evening meal preparation, and then enjoy the arts and crafts, recreational games or social events.

Dorchester Youth Collaborative
1514-A Dorchester Avenue
Dorchester, MA 02122
617-288-1748

The Dorchester Youth Collaborative (DYC) is a non-profit, community-based multi-service agency that has been operating since 1978. DYC offers an innovative counseling and outreach program to area youth experiencing poverty, social maladjustment, truancy and repeated failures in the local community. The agency began as a grass-roots movement of local Dorchester residents, who attempted to address the multi-faceted needs of a group of low-income local teens who could neither compete in the local schools, in employment situations, or in social settings, nor could they avoid involvement in crime and drug and alcohol abuse.

Soon after the program opened it became apparent that the teens involved needed other services as well. The Youth Collaborative attempted to network program youth into then existing local services, mainly those at the Boys Club, the Y.M.C.A., the local mental health center, and other area social service agencies, while providing a "youth center" for teens receiving counseling services and increasing numbers of drop-ins who found DYC a safe place for black, hispanic, and white youth to congregate and to communicate with each other.

In 1982, DYC started an Education Program to provide tutoring and to assist those youth not able to remain in the local school system and in 1983, the agency established the TIES Crime Prevention Project with the help of an Eisenhower Foundation grant. DYC was selected as one of ten national projects by the Foundation to develop the capacity within the Dorchester community to respond to the problems of its youth. The Prevention Clubs were at the heart of the project, integrating area youth into activities and involvements that maintained a strong social control structure (adult and peer group), as well as direct assistance in school-related issues, substance abuse problems, and family matters. Two other TIES components are a Family and Community Mediation Project, which address communication issues between adolescents and their families and local community conflicts. In 1984, the community organization component was enhanced with the establishment of a local community volunteer group, the "TIES Council", representing a cross-section of area residents who work closely with area neighborhoods and youth in the Prevention Clubs program. A DYC youth worker was also placed at a local middle school to provide community linkage for youth and their families, as well as critical direct services to problem teens in the school.

In 1985, DYC added a Job Developer to assist teens in the Prevention Clubs and other youth in the community with job preparation, interview skills, accountability on the job and support services. During 1986, the agency added another school-based youth worker in a second middle school and hired a community organizer. A 24 hour answering service through which all DYC staff can be reached in case of an emergency was instituted in 1986.

The growth of the agency over the past six years from a single counseling

support program to six programs (Counseling/Casework, Education Program, Prevention Clubs, Dispute Mediation Program, Job Development, and Community Organization) offering highly integrated services to area youth and their families was accomplished with the cooperation of state, city, foundation and private funding. Youth attending Prevention Clubs may avail themselves of other DYC services or they may be referred by programs within the agency for participation in the clubs. The agency has its own capacity to integrate services for youth, as well as maintaining strong ties with other community agencies and local professional resources.

The increasing number of teens attending DYC activities, the seriousness of some of the problems they confront and the ever younger ages of the those coming to the agency are indicative of the problems found in the community. A recent survey of Prevention Club teens identified the lack of anywhere to go after school and during the summers as major issues. Youth complained of boredom, fear of violence, the negative street environment, and the widespread availability of drugs and alcohol which create problems both in the schools and in the local community. DYC staff have to deal with providing teens with basic necessities. Often the adolescents are malnourished, lack appropriate clothing or have health or emotional problems. It is not unusual for staff to find no adult home as late as midnight when dropping a teen off.

The Prevention Clubs provide structured, constructive after school and summer activities and involvement for 180 low income, high risk male (70%) and female (30%) youth, aged 10 to 18 on a daily basis without charge to participants. Over 200 teens are served during the course of a year. The racial composition of the participants is 40% black, 40% hispanic, and 20% white. A small number of Asians attend the clubs. Over the past two years, an increasing number of Latino youth have entered the program and the agency has improved its bi-lingual, bi-cultural staffing and programming and increased its collaboration with a local Hispanic agency. Thirty-five percent of the participants are ages 10 to 13; 65% are over 13.

The average Prevention Club participant attends the program three times a week and the majority stay in the program about one year. There is an average turnover rate of 40 to 50% from year to year, mostly due to teens reaching age 18, although some accommodation is made for youth who are still in need of service. The Prevention Clubs are funded by major Boston foundations, local government, businesses and religious organizations and has an annual operating budget of $115,000.

The Prevention Clubs function primarily as a drop in, after school, evening and weekend program during the school year and during the summer. The Clubs have a monthly calendar of activities and provide transportation (van) for various activities. During the school year, the Club operates Monday through Thursday from 3:30 PM to 9:00 PM. There is some flexibility with longer hours for teens who have dropped out of school and are receiving individualized instruction. The Saturday and Sunday schedule is noon to 7:00 PM and activities include individual outreach, counseling or field trips. The summer schedule is Monday through Thursday from 1:00 PM to 8:00 PM and Saturday and Sunday from noon to 6:00 PM.

There are five professional staff working with teens in the Prevention Clubs. A full time Director is assisted by a half-time Assistant Clinical Director, one full-time and 2 part-time group leaders and approximately 10 community volunteers. The staff is racially mixed but this fluctuates according to the volunteers present. The core staff is predominantly white and the program finds it difficult to compete for minority staff in a tight labor market. The low salaries paid contribute to high staff turnover. The Director of the Prevention Club must have a social work degree and five years experience. The Education Director must have state teaching credentials. All other staff are selected on the basis of experience and ability to work with cliental. The Prevention Clubs try to maintain a 1 staff: 10 participant ratio. Staff have weekly agency meetings and clinical supervision.

In addition to DYC's main facility, three other sites were used by the Prevention Clubs in 1986 including the University of Massachusetts, the local Boys Club, and the Community Resource room at the Franklin Park Zoo. These sites served an additional 50 to 65 teens. Recruitment into the Clubs is largely by word of mouth through a core group of teens who bring in their friends. In addition, staff go into the community to where teens hang out and encourage kids to join the program.

The primary goal of the Prevention Clubs is to break the cycle of failure and hopelessness that has trapped these teens. Reality therapy in individual encounters with youth by staff, team building efforts of youth groups and various activities are all used to achieve this goal. Each member of the Prevention Club is given an individual assessment to develop an accurate picture of the problems and needs which must be addressed if the teen is to be helped to make the transition from the streets back to school, work and other established mainstream activities. After the assessment the needs of each adolescent are prioritized and the teen is channeled into one or more of the four major activity areas:

> Arts and Creative Expression: incudes murals and art work, sound production, video, photography and break dancing. Activities are guided by what the teens want to do and are designed to increase self-esteem, make positive use of participant's energies, and develop and recognize talent. Currently the program has a girls dance groups, graffiti mural painting, and a song writing group. This later activity was initiated by a group of teens concerned about the problem of crack in the community and among their friends and siblings. The group researched the issue and wrote an anti-crack rap song. Program staff helped the group arrange to record the song in a professional studio and volunteers from two local professional music schools played back up. The group has been performing the song at various schools, community centers and on the radio and are now busy marketing the song.
>
> Job Achievement: includes community volunteer work, work crews and job training. Participants on the work crews may be paid small stipends for doing yard work, small carpentry and repair jobs. Prevention Club members also work with the Job Developer who provides job readiness instruction, job placement, counseling, follow-up with

employers and support for the teens. Club members referred to employers must first prove that they are motivated to work and that they are reliable and can keep appointments. Staff work extensively with the teens to reinforce the necessity of being on time and provide constant feedback to participants top encourage them to accept increasing levels of responsibility. Better functioning teens are often paired with other less well functioning adolescents as informal peer counselors. Agency employment services are free to the employer and many of the teens qualify for the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit which provides an additional inducement to area employers to accept program participants.

Education: includes drug and alcohol raps, educational field trips and discussions to foster basic knowledge of key health issues. Teens in school are provided with homework assistance and their classroom attendance is monitored by checking with school personnel. In addition, the DYC school provides individualized instruction for youth with chronic school difficulties.

Socialization/Recreation: includes activity trips, climbing and other outward-bound type of activities, parties and sports to foster team work and self-confidence. DYC does not provide a recreation program but in keeping with the programs's philosophy of encouraging teens to participate in existing services the agency pays for membership in local health and fitness programs. Teen also participate in the evening and weekend meal preparation including planning menus, shopping, cooking and hopefully cleaning up. Participants, staff and volunteers routinely share meals.

An increasing number of younger teens are coming to the Prevention Clubs. This will necessitate program expansion and the development of a capacity to work with youth over several years. In order to expand the program will need additional finances and understanding by the community that the Prevention Clubs help young people to acquire social and life skills that will enable them to integrate into mainstream activities and break the cycle of drug, economic and social dependency.

The Girls Club of Dallas
5415 Maple Street
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Dallas, Texas 75232
(214) 630-5213

The Girls Club of Dallas, Texas, an affiliate of the Girls Club of America, seeks to enable all girls to find their identity and to achieve a sense of community by offering programs that give girls the skills they need to make the decisions that will shape their lives and develop their potential. The Club provides a safe, supportive and nurturing environment, particularly for girls who might otherwise be "on the streets" or return after school to empty homes. Structured activities include: academic remediation and enrichment, sports and recreation, creative arts, crafts and dance, job counseling, career orientation, training and employment, family life education, and health education including pregnancy prevention, youth leadership and personal development to help girls work on increasing their self-esteem. The Club also has a community service component which varies among sites and includes such activities as: adopt a grandparent, and health fairs.

Some 3,000 girls aged 6 to 18 are served at the three Club centers in Oak Cliff, South Dallas and West Dallas: neighborhoods characterized by a large minority population living in poor economic conditions of high unemployment and low income relative to Dallas County which has the highest teen pregnancy rate in the country. West Dallas is 97% black; 90% of families are headed by single parents; and 55% of families have incomes below $5,000 per year. South Dallas is 99% black; 65-70% are single parent families; and family income ranges from $10,000 to $25,000. Oak Cliff is largely Hispanic (90%), the large majority of families (80-95%) are two parent; family income is between $10,000 and $25,000; at least 15% of the population does not have green immigration cards. The Clubs serve girls only and most are considered to be at high risk of adolescent pregnancy and parenting. Fifteen percent of the girls served are black, 33% Hispanic. During 1986, the clubs served about 8-10% of the eligible population in their neighborhoods; one club estimates that it served as much as 25% of those eligible.

The Clubs, established in 1971, are currently operating on a $500,000 budget. Major funding comes from the local United Way ($316,100), with additional financial support from private contributors. Clubs are open daily year round. During the school year the Clubs are open in the after-school hours, and from 7:30 am to 6 pm in the summer. Membership is required. There is a $2 annual fee which can be waived for those who cannot afford the fee, and enrollment is required in specific 6 week course segments. For the summer program a supply fee of $10.00 per week is charged on a sliding fee scale but scholarships are available. There is also a drop-in component to the program. Some of the enrollment based programs include an attendance requirement. In the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention pilot program, for example, both enrollment and attendance is required and the instructor follows up on absentees by telephone.

Parent participation is encouraged both as volunteers and through specific mother/daughter classes, such as the Growing Together curriculum which focuses on communication around the issues of sexuality for girls ages 12 to 14. Parent evaluation forms are used to obtain feedback on the various club offerings.

Professional staff and volunteers coordinate and deliver programs to Club members. Each of the Clubs has a branch director, who is part of the 18 member professional staff. A full time Family Life Educator is on staff to work with the girls in age appropriate activities designed to impact the problems of adolescent pregnancy and sexual abuse. There is also a full time career educator who works directly with the 12 plus group to explore vocational options and examine roles for women. A peer counseling component is staffed by 24 Club members and an extensive group of volunteers (50 per year) who contribute their time to help the club function effectively. A new ombudsman program using volunteers is currently being developed.

The Girls Clubs of Dallas has developed three program areas which are targeted to solve the critical problems facing young women today: 1) programs to help girls take charge of their future before their lives are patterned for them by an unwanted pregnancy; 2) programs to counteract the low paying jobs which perpetuate the feminization of poverty; and 3) programs to increase girls' ability to develop competence both as workers and parents. Programs in each of these areas are discussed below.

Dallas has been chosen by the Girls Club of America as one of four Girls Clubs in the United States[1] to take part in a national research study. This three year pilot is designed to study the effect of intensive family life education and its impact on the teen pregnancy rate. The four experimental sites are matched by four control sites which will offer standard girls club after school activities minus the family life education component. For the Dallas Girls Club, the impact of the family life education component should be greatly enhanced by current attention the coordination of adolescent services in Dallas. Four distinct curricula are used in the project based on models which have proven successful on impacting the rate of teen pregnancy in other communities. Each program is designed to be a critical turning point in a girl's life. Three programs are designed for the younger teen; two for the older teen.

- Kidability is designed for the 9-11 year old girl to teach assertiveness and reduce sexual abuse.

- Will Power Won't Power is a six week course for 12-14 year old girls which teaches assertiveness techniques while reinforcing the concept that postponing sexual involvement is positive.

- Growing Together is a five week course for 12-14 year old girls and their mothers or caretakers. These classes focus on communication

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[1]The other sites are Wilmington Delaware, Omaha Nebraska, and Memphis Tennessee. Funding for the study is provided in part by Carnegie Corporation.

between mother and daughter around the issues of sexuality and the consequences of pregnancy before it occurs.

- The Health Bridge, implemented in the summer of 1986 is the most comprehensive of the four programs. Based on the successful Maternal and Infant Care Project in Saint Paul, Minnesota, the current program adapts the school based clinic model for implementation within the structure of the Club and offers weekly classes on topics from aerobic activity to reproductive physiology under the direction of a Nurse Practitioner. In cooperation with the West Dallas Children and Youth Clinics, girls are able to also visit the clinic and obtain any health care they need including contraceptives.

- Choices is a nine week course for older adolescents which emphasizes future oriented thinking. It reinforces that each girl has choices and helps her analyze the results of each choice. The curriculum stress responsibility and planning including career options. A teen Woman's Journal for Self Awareness and Personal Planning is used. Exercises in the course challenge participants to confront adulthood realistically and include tasks such as developing a family budget or reading the classified for a job.

The Girls Club of Dallas also places high value on career awareness, mathematics and science instruction and leadership training through its programs:

- The Young Women's Company provides pre-employment skills training and actual entrepreneurial experience. During the academic year, the girls are involved in classes where they learn to "dress for success", write resumes, etc. During the summer the Young Women's Company runs a business which allows the girls to practice what they learned in the classroom and gives them "hands on" experience. They have the opportunity to manage the business and learn why it is important to be on time, carry their full share of the work load and work as a team. This year, the Young Women's Company was selected to be the " Sno-Cone" vendor at the Summer Shakespeare Festival in Dallas Fair Park. In preparing for conducting their Sno-Cone business, the Club members have had to negotiate with the Fair Park regarding overhead, deal with the City of Dallas to meet requirements for a health permit, and negotiate with the Shakespeare Guild in order to be selected as vendor. In the process these young women have acquired skills and knowledge unavailable in their environment which will make them more competitive in the job market.

- Job Shadowing pairs Club members during school vacations with a mentor from a local firm or a professional. Club members follow their mentor and help her in her job for a minimum of four hours in her day. Exposure to the work environment serves to expand the young women's horizons and help them set goals for achievement.

- The Gathering provides Club members with opportunities to explore a variety of careers with professional women in an informal workshop

setting. Guest speakers provide examples of career choices and the educational requirements necessary for achieving that choice.

The Girls Club of Dallas has encountered barriers to more extensive program development primarily because of transportation problems. The three neighborhoods served are in high risk, high crime areas and the Club members need transportation if they are to participate. Also, it is difficult to take Club members to cultural events in the city without transportation. Because of the large age range served (ages 6 to 18) it is sometimes difficult to attract teens to a facility serving younger children. To address this problem, the Club is planning to expand programming for teens in the evening hours and on Saturdays. Cultural and economic barriers in the Hispanic community have had a limiting effect on more extensive involvement of this population in Club offerings. In the Black community teens are often needed to provide child care for younger siblings, which keeps them from fully experiencing what the Club has to offer.

A variety of approaches are used to monitor and evaluate Club programs. Staff keep activity sheets to monitor attendance patterns. Club members and parents are asked to evaluate program offerings and community leaders are invited to a yearly luncheon and asked to rank what they consider to be the most important aspects of the program. The Teen Pregnancy Program will receive formal evaluation as part of the national research study.

Early Adolescent Helper Program
Center for Advanced Study in Education (CASE) Room 620
The Graduate School and University Center of
The State University of New York
25 West 43rd Street
New York, New York 10036
(212) 719-9066

The Early Adolescent Helper Program (EAHP) which began in 1982 is designed to involve inner city adolescents, aged eleven to fourteen, in a program which recognizes young adolescents developmental needs and their capacity for productive participation in their community. The Helper program motivates middle or junior high school students to stay in school; provides structured settings after school, when many young adolescents are unsupervised and at loose ends; helps young adolescents to learn first hand about the world of work and to prepare them for their future roles as citizens, workers and parents; eases young adolescents transition to the next stage of development; and provides extra hands at least twice a week for community service agencies including child care centers, school-age child care and senior citizen programs where their enthusiasm and energy is welcome. The program is hoping to become involved in environmental improvement and neighborhood projects as well.

The Helper program began under the auspices of the National Commission on Resources for Youth (NCRY) a small national organization established in 1967, which was committed to expanding opportunities for young people to assume active, responsible roles in their communities through Youth Participation Programs. In these programs young people gain direct experience in the real world, making decisions and taking responsibilities for the consequences of their actions, working in partnership with their peers and with adults, and meeting genuine community needs. The Youth Participation program differs from other youth programs insofar as it provides participants with a chance to reflect critically on their experience and to study related subject matter in a seminar setting under the guidance of a specially trained group leader.

EAHP was initiated by NCRY with private foundation grants as a pilot project in three New York City intermediate and junior high schools in the 1982-83 school year. By years end 70, eight and ninth grade students in East Harlem, Queens and South Bronx had completed the program's combination of seminars and two afternoons per week work experience at six day care centers and a bilingual Head Start program. Beginning in 1983 sponsorship for the Helper program was assumed by The Center for Advanced Study in Education of the City University of New York. Through the first three years of the Helper Program, more than 300 junior high and middle school students participated in the school based program in five community school districts and nine schools, with Helpers serving in 14 community agencies.

Now in its fifth year, the Helper program has spread to 20 schools in nine of New York City's community school districts in four boroughs. With two exceptions all of the schools within which the program operates have been in

the inner city. A National Dissemination Projects was also initiated and the Helper program was established in Bridgeport, Connecticut; Phoenix, Arizona; Boston, Massachusetts; and Oakland, California. An estimated 20 community agencies use Helpers in diverse roles and settings. Over the five years of program operations 500 youths have participated in New York City and the dissemination sites. In 1985-86, the program reached 150 to 200 inner-city, disadvantaged, "at risk" youth ages 11 to 14 at no cost to the student.

The Helper program's $100,000 annual operating budget is funded by the Browne Foundation, the Bruner Foundation, the Edwin Gould Foundation for Children, The Edward W. Hazen Foundation, Lavenburg Corner House, and The Joe and Emily Lowe Foundation. The American Can Company Foundation provided initial funding for the National Dissemination Project.

The program is located in low income areas in the New York City sites and the dissemination communities and serves predominantly minority (Hispanic and Black) youth. Between 60 and 75% of participants are on full support school lunch programs. During the first program year equal numbers of boys and girls enrolled but there has been a decided shift to a majority of girls during the last year. One weakness in the program is that it is viewed as a course and the students tend to enroll only once which provides little continuity or carry over from year to year. The Helper program operates primarily during the school year in the after school hours. The Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention Program is using the Helper program as part of their career exploration component and provides a summer experience in two inner city settlements and day camps which include some stipends.

EAHP is not a direct service program but serves as a resource to those working directly with young adolescents. EAHP operates with a small central staff, who provide assistance to the many school and agency staff people who make the program work at the local level. The core staff of three plus three consultants develop training materials, train teachers and group leaders (often guidance counselors), conduct fund raising efforts for the project and evaluate the impact of the program on both the adolescent Helpers and those they help.

The Helpers are first given careful training and time for reflection in four weekly classroom seminars during which time they are asked to evaluate their commitment to the project and their ability to be reliable and responsible helpers. After the helper is placed in a work setting, seminars continue as a place to meet and share experiences, discuss problems and successes and reflect on the meaning of their activities. It is recommended that helpers work 2 afternoons a week for at least 2 hours. The classroom seminar and on-site work are seen as complementary and help students make the connection between classroom learning and the real world. The program is constructed with sufficient flexibility to accommodate the extreme differences in emotional, physical, and cognitive development among 10 to 15 year olds. In addition to providing an opportunity to serve and feel needed, which even the youngest participant responds to, the program affords young people the opportunity to become involved with adults as colleagues and peers often for the first time, and to expand the number of adults they interact with beyond parents, relatives and teachers.

The New York City Human Resources Administration supports volunteer services such as EAHP in a number of ways. Free bus passes are provided for students who are placed in community agencies some distance from their school or home. Students needing to travel on public transportation to or from their work site are assigned in pairs from the same neighborhood so they can return home together.

The racial and ethnic match between Helpers and group leaders is school specific and tends not to reflect the ethnicity of the students. Role models are more likely to be available in the community agencies and summer programs where the Helpers work. One program, a bilingual Head Start, recognized and valued the Hispanic Helpers for their bilingualism. Attempts are made to hold staff to student ratios in the seminars to 1:10 or 1:15 to avoid letting the students get lost in large class sized groups but at the same time protecting the young adolescent from the danger of self-exposure which may exist in small groups. The Director feels that youth in the 11 to 14 year age range need to be provided a protected setting in which they can discuss how they feel about their relationships with younger children and the senior citizens they interact with in their work sites.

Supervision of work site activities is conducted by the use of sign in/sign out sheets which also permit Helpers to check off the activities they participated in. These activity lists not only enable the program to monitor the frequency of certain activities but also provide program to school accountability. For the Helpers the activity lists provide a planning tool for future activities and a way of evaluating what they have learned.

Parent involvement in the program has not received a great deal of attention to date. Parents receive a description of the program and are shown a slide tape. Parents must sign a permission slip for their youngsters off site work placement in accordance to school regulations.

A very important aspect of the Helper program is providing young adolescents with an opportunity to bail out of their commitment if they feel unable to carry out their agreement. Each Helper is given a predetermined trial period in their community placement, a chance to observe and learn about the agency and its clients before making a firm commitment. This enables youngsters to change their minds without losing face or dropping out because they cannot deal with the fact that they over committed themselves.

Although the program does not provide payment to participants, Helpers are encouraged to see their activities as real as paid jobs. Helpers are told that their experience will probably place them in a better position to become part of the summer youth employment program if they are 14 by the summer. The program does provide non-monetary rewards. New York City gives certificates signed by the Mayor for voluntary service. The program holds an annual convention of Helpers and provides six foot Hero sandwiches. This annual convention provides a place where Helpers can meet each other often for the first time, which is not unusual in a large city divided by neighborhoods.

While the program essentially provides pre-employment and career

exploration it also functions as a pregnancy prevention program. Youth working in child care programs begin to think about what it takes to be a successful parent and interact with three and four year olds. Youngsters with this type of experience decide rather easily than an 11 to 14 year old cannot appropriately contemplate parenthood and be adequate to the task. In addition to the direct experiential learning in the day care centers, a parenting course is taught in the seminar sequence and the appropriateness of teenage parenthood is discussed at the end of the course. One participant wrote, "I thought that it is terrible that young girls have to have sex and don't know the possibility that goes with that situation". Clearly the message of having responsibility for young children if even for an hour or two a week does come through.

The Helper Program has been evaluated each year since its inception. These evaluations by an outside consultant have helped the program to identify problem areas and develop strategies for program improvement. The program has consistently received positive evaluations and encouragement for its continuation and replication.

Carole Robertson Center for Learning
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Chicago, Illinois 60608
(312) 243-7300

The Carole Robertson Center for Learning (CRC) is a nonprofit, parent/community-controlled program that serves school-age children who live and/or attend schools in Chicago's near west side. CRC was named in memory of a young adolescent who was killed in the 1963 bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. It stands as a statement against the violent environment that contributed to her death.

CRC's program includes day care, academic enrichment, recreation, arts and crafts, classes for parents, social service and health referrals, and a school-age child care program.

The school-age child care program is dedicated to providing a place where urban youngsters can be comfortable and safe, before and after school, on school holidays and during the summer months. The staff tries to create a stimulating environment where youngsters can learn many skills, including how to make decisions and how to become responsible members of a diverse community. The center provides both physical and emotional support to enable children to reach their full potential and to succeed.

This coed program has been in operation since 1974, and serves Title XX eligible black youth from eight different public schools. Participants range in age from 5 to 15; over 50% are over age 10. Between 70 and 80 percent of the youngsters come from single parent families. Eighty children attend the program daily and there is a current waiting list of 160. Due to low turnover there are only about 10 openings per year for those on the waiting list. The center is open daily, year round and operates before school, 6:00 AM until school time; after school, 2:00 PM to 5:30 PM; evenings 5:30 PM to 9:00 PM; school vacations 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM; and 6:00 AM to 4:30 PM during the summer months. The program is licensed by the state and is funded by the Department of Children and Family Services, the Child Care Food Program and the United Way. Community Development Block Grant money from the City of Chicago funds the centers' Family Support program. The current annual operating budget is $327,000 of which $278,000 is used for the school-age child care component of the program. Fees are based on income and range from no fee to $62 per month. Most families pay between $20 and $30 per month in accordance to the fee schedule established by the State of Illinois for Title XX/SSBG funded day care.

Fourteen professionals and 2 volunteers work with the youths in a variety of program models. On the average a staff to participant ratio of 1 to 10 is maintained which permits adequate supervision at all times. Activities are structured to provide the children with space and time to physically and to emotionally unwind. There is flexibility in choices of available activities and the setting encourages the development of strong relationships with both adults and other children. Specifically the program is structured to include three basic program models:

- Group Time: Each child spends 2 days with a group of 20 similar aged children. During Group Time, children work on group projects, plan fund-raising events, and play games.

- Playshops: Activities planned and organized by the teachers including dance, theatre, chorus, woodworking, gym games, and ceramics are offered as Playshops. The youths are counseled into activities according to interest and age appropriateness.

- Fantastic Fridays and Other Special Events: Fantastic Fridays are planned and executed by the kids. There are all-center events such as talent shows, beauty contests and lip-syncing contests.

Regular attendance is expected at the center. Approximately 30 participants attend one school and they are met by program staff and walked over to the program. Parents phone the Center if the youngster will be absent from the program on any given day. Follow-up phone calls on unexpected absentees are made each day after attendance is taken.

Families play an important role at CRC. The corporate board that governs the center is 60% parents. The other 40 percent, who are elected by the parent members, represent business and community. To a large extent control of the organization rests in the community. CRC advocates on behalf of families with the local schools and has also become a forum for community concerns. The center values parental input and suggestions for improving the after school program. For example, CRC instituted a quiet time for the last 45 minutes in each day in response to parents concern that time for homework be built into the program. The Center's evening Family Support program is run by parents who are responsible for managing all aspects of the program with assistance from CRC program staff. The Family Support program includes extensive recreation offerings, weight loss classes, aerobics, discussion and support groups.

The Center is not mandated to serve young adolescents; it does so because of the need expressed by the young people themselves. Because the staff has chosen to work with this age population, it has had to meet certain challenges including designing program activities that are more "grown up" and developing special interest courses on topics such as sexuality or drug abuse prevention. The staff realizes that the young adolescent participants need opportunities to achieve and to test their competence. To meet these needs students are hired to help with activities. In addition, two of the older youths sit on the CRC personnel review board which is responsible for hiring and firing all staff. CRC also encourages young people to participate in their community. A group of CRC participants wrote a proposal for $500, which was funded by a local development organization to refurbish a playground.

Along with age-appropriate, interesting activities, CRC director Maria Whelan emphasizes the importance of "wise staffing" in creating a successful program for young adolescents. She believes that young teens respond best to

a person who is willing to speak frankly and to develop strong relationships. The person must also be able to give young adolescents some freedom to direct their own activities. Most staff are from the surrounding neighborhood and remain at the center for six to seven years. Over half of the staff are former AFDC recipients. They know both the participants and their families, a factor especially important for young adolescent males. Weekly staff and team meetings in addition to scheduled special meetings on drug abuse, CPR, etc., provide ongoing in-service training. Four full days per year are devoted to program planning in which all staff are involved. Staff also often chose to participate in activities with parents (e.g., programs on adolescent development, etc.,) which further enhances the relationship between the program and the families served.

While there are unique programming aspects for young adolescents, the CRC staff believe that mixing age groups has a positive impact on all participants. Because youngsters may start in kindergarten and continue through eighth grade, they have a chance to develop ongoing relationships, and as young adolescents they serve as older sibling figures and positive role models for younger children. The program is so popular that 14 and 15 year olds often have to be encouraged to leave to provide opportunities for younger children to grow into leadership positions. CRC does maintain contact with these older teens by encouraging them to drop in on Friday afternoons when there are open visiting hours. About 20 to 30 youth return to CRC every week and staff estimate that they are in contact with at least 80% of CRC graduates.

The CRC has made a commitment to serving youngsters and has succeeded in providing an effective and stimulating program for a variety of age groups. In fact, the CRC would like to expand the program if more space were made available to them. Given the large waiting list, CRC estimates it could triple enrollment if adequate space were available. Even if funds do not allow for expansion and budget cutbacks jeopardize program areas, the CRC board has voted that maintaining services to young adolescents should be top priority.

Bridge Fund, Inc. After School Program
531 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02118
(617) 427-4141

Bridge Fund, Inc. After School Program established in 1972 by the Urban League with funding from the Department of Public Welfare, provides year round after-school day care and full day care during holidays and summer vacations to youths aged 5-13. The program is 40% academic and 60% social, cultural and recreational. There is a strong emphasis on building self-esteem in the low-income youngsters served from the Roxbury and South-End sections of Boston. Eighty-five percent of the youths are black, 10% are Hispanic; approximately half of the families receive welfare, 29% are in work training programs, and the remainder are protective service cases. The program served 172 youngsters in 1986, and average daily attendance is 125 of which 40 are between the ages of 10 and 15. The program is funded by the Department of Social Service and the Associated Grant Makers, a consortium of local foundations and corporations, and has a current operating budget of $400,000.

Fees are based on a sliding scale and range from $2.77 to $10.50 per week depending on family size and income. The seventeen paid professionals and 1 volunteer on the staff work with the youngsters in 6 different classes based on age and maturity. Homework or work provided by staff members is first on the agenda, followed by a snack and the main activities including arts and crafts, creative writing and games. In addition, there are weekly field trips and cooking opportunities as well as movies and music classes every other week. On school days, children are provided a nutritious snack. During full day sessions, two meals and a snack are provided.

Seventy-five percent of the children are picked up daily, directly from school. The rest arrive at the center on their own. Parents are notified immediately if a youngster is absent from the program.

Because the program serves inner-city, low-income families, many of the children require referrals for health and counseling services. Parents look to program staff for support with regard to court related issues and the program attempts to provide advocacy and services for the whole family.

Parents serve on the program's Board of Directors as full voting members and attend monthly parent meetings. Informally, parents are welcome at the center at any time and are encouraged to join the weekly field trips. The major problem faced by this program, as is true of many other programs serving low income children and youth, is obtaining sufficient resources to attract quality staff.

ARTS, Inc.
32 Market Street
New York, New York 10002
(212) 962-8231

ARTS, Inc., is a teaching, resource and publishing center for the Chinese and Hispanic neighborhoods of the lower East Side of New York. ARTS has served this unique immigrant neighborhood since 1970, bringing together youths, artists, residents and educators. ARTS emphasizes:

- active participation of youth in learning and creating
- equal access to art and culture for all young people
- preserving the integrity of the cultural traditions of the neighborhood

ARTS uses four program components to achieve its goals:

- Community Arts: More than 1000 young people a year work with performing, visual and folk artists in traditional forms of Chinese and Hispanic arts. Through both classes and performances, youth are inspired to continue the cultural traditions of their heritage. ARTS also sponsors its instructors in professional presentations of their own work.

- School Programming: ARTS fosters community school cooperation by having 15 artists work directly in the classrooms of 7 local schools to involve youngsters and their teachers in the cultures of their neighborhood. Programs of performing and visual arts, and the humanities are integrated into the regular school curriculum. Youngsters work with classmates of different backgrounds and eventually perform for their peers, parents, and the community.

- Publication: ARTS publishes materials on the Chinese and Hispanic communities, documenting their holidays, language, music, games, and history. Twenty booklets and two major publications-"A Pictorial History of Chinatown, New York City", and "the Trictionary", a Chinese-English-Spanish dictionary are now in print.

Research Projects (Trictionary, Encyclopedia, WAVES):

- The Trictionary, published in 1982, was a special research project of ARTS developed for the youth of the community. It was written and translated by several hundred Chinese and Hispanic youth, and published as a 432 page glossary including biography and gazetteer sections.

- An Encyclopedia, based on interests and questions that grew out of the Trictionary is currently being developed. This Encyclopedia will be based on the culture, folklore and ethnography of the peoples of the Lower East Side of New York. The goals of this project are to develop the skills and reasoning powers; to inform local youngsters of their own and other cultures; to do valid original research on the cultures of the Lower East Side today: and to publish this work in a useful form. Work on this

project will enable the young people to examine the meaning of their family customs and beliefs, and to compare them with those of their neighbors. It is hoped that the project will promote understanding and friendship among all ages of the community as well as help the participants gain language and organizational skills that will help them in school and beyond.

WAVES, another study project of ARTS, Inc., was established in 1981 by two teachers to help young people aged 10 to 18 document their own cultures and community -- the historic and ever-changing Lower East Side of Manhattan. Through various activities, they learn about their own culture and that of their neighbors. They learn from their elders, and from each other, and take pride in their rich and varied family traditions. Waves was originally funded by the Hazen Foundation and is currently funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, The New York State Council for the Arts, and Con Edison. The current annual operating budget is $55,000.

WAVES works with 100 interested youths two days a week, after school, from October through May. Registration is required. The 10 to 14 year olds work with 12 professionals (8 adults, 4 trained high school students) to document their community using writing, drawing, photography, interviewing, surveys, maps, and models. At the end of the year, there is an exhibition of the completed work.

WAVES serves low-income male and female youths, most of whom are recent immigrants or are from immigrant families. The racial composition of the group is 60% Chinese, 30% Hispanic, 7% black, and 3% white. The project works in English, Spanish, and 3 dialects of Chinese. The name Waves was chosen because it means something in all three languages, as well as signifying the waves of immigrants who have come to this neighborhood during the past century.

There are no formal provisions for parent participation, but an enormous amount of cultural information comes from parents, extended families and neighbors in the community. Youth are assigned specific interview tasks that help shape and develop the story of the neighborhood.

Mary Scherbatskoy, Co-Director of WAVES believes that the basic barrier to this type of program is the demanding nature of the work. "It's a difficult project that requires enormous energy and commitment from all participants." The rewards, however, are great. Through WAVES, youth are studying their own culture and community, improving skills and making a significant contribution to the historical record.

Center 54
Junior High After School Program
107th Street and Columbus Avenue
New York, New York 10625

Center 54 is a year-round after school program located in Junior High 54 on the West Side of Manhattan. The program is designed to reach out to young adolescents and their families and help them view the school as a supportive, non-threatening institution.

The program serves low-income, minority youths from approximately eight schools. The hours of operation are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 3-6 and 7-10; Tuesday and Thursday 3-7, and Sunday 12-6. Enrollment is free but parents need to sign a consent form for participation. Each student is issued an I.D. card that is presented at the door and staff may make a follow-up phone call if the record indicates that a regular attendee is absent. Currently a director, 2 social workers, plus 3 part time teachers, 5 child care workers and 2 activity specialists work with more than 300 youths. Daily attendance runs at over 100.

The after-school program allows for creative expression and meaningful participation balanced with a structure and set of limits. There is a daily focus on academics prior to recreational activities. Staff provide remedial academic assistance, homework monitoring, and tutoring in the Learning Center. Recreational activities include sports and games, drama, arts and crafts, weight lifting and rap sessions. Field trips to museums, plays and special events are incorporated into the program. Fund raisers, such as bake sales are planned and profits are used in a variety of ways including holiday gifts to nursing homes or hospitals.

In addition to the after-school program, there are specific programs sponsored by community agencies. Bank Street College sponsors the Basic Skills Academy, a GED program for older adolescents 16 to 21 and Rheedlan Foundation allows the center staff to operate supportive programs that help keep students in school and on grade level. The dropout prevention programs include sending out social workers to find youths who are absent from school each day, wake-up calls, after-school counseling and family advocacy. The Ryan Health Clinic is the main referral agency for Center 54 students with health problems. Clinic staff assist with health education and provide weekly sessions on a variety of health issues, including sexuality. The Manhattan Valley Youth Outreach Program provides mental health counseling and leadership training.

Joe Stewart, Director of Center 54, believes that the program is successful because it has a strong staff that is sensitive to meeting the needs of the age group, it maintains a program of physical activity, and it provides opportunities for the youths to define themselves as well as to develop a sense of competence and achievement.

Levels
Great Neck Library
Bayview Avenue at Grist Mill Lane
Great Neck, New York 11024

Levels is a unique youth facility, a cultural center and meeting place for junior high school through college aged youth and an integral part of the Great Neck Library. Recently, a junior Levels program has been added for 5th and 6th graders. Levels is located in a suburban Long Island community just east of New York City. Although the community is wealthy and highly sophisticated with extensive educational and recreational facilities it also has a growing population of black, hispanic, Iranian, Asiatic and single parent families. Presently, Levels serves mostly white, middle- to upper middle-class youths, but the Director expects participation by minority groups to increase substantially in the near future.

Levels has run as a semi-independent part of the library since 1974, and is located in its own specially designed lower-level space. A separate entrance at the back of the main library building allows the facility to be open when the library is closed. The 3,500 square feet used by the program was developed to create a feeling of openness and freedom while at the same time providing a variety of intimate areas for small groups or individuals. The design, a series of elevated multi-leveled pits separated by low walls and carpeted steps for seating plus a central area containing a stage surrounded by a large area of floor space, led participants to choose "Levels" as the name of the facility. The well lit, brightly painted and carpeted area is well equipped with stage lighting, a central sound system, a piano and a canteen area. The facility was designed to function without furniture.

The program was created in response to the large number of teen who began to use the new main library as a place not only to study but to meet friends and talk. At the time there were no other facilities open in the evenings where young people could congregate; their only other alternatives were street corners or luncheonettes. The new library was convenient for adults as well as for youths and tension over the use of the facility developed between the two groups. The decision to create a separate youth facility was reached by a committee composed of both adults and teens. In order to make the facility more easily accessible to young people who did not live in the immediate neighborhood, a free bus service was instituted which runs a regularly scheduled route five days a week. The route includes Great Necks' black neighborhoods where it has been successful in attracting low income youth to the program.

Levels adheres to the philosophy that young people will flourish and develop into happy, productive adults if they are treated with respect and trust and given a chance to test their abilities in a supportive context which they find meaningful. The program's objectives are to maintain an open atmosphere where young people can feel comfortable; to support individual growth through interpersonal experiences and workshops; to offer a showcase for individual achievement; and to provide a setting where artistic expression can be appreciated.

The program has its own staff of two full-time and five part-time youth workers, who usually have professional experience as artists, dancers, or musicians. Youth representatives sit on a Personnel Committee which includes the Levels Director and staff. All members of the Committee interview prospective staff. The young people follow an interviewing protocol they developed which includes a role playing sequence to test whether the prospective employee can handle working with the diverse group of teens found at Levels. No staff is hired without the approval of program participants. Youth also sit on a planning board that suggests and approves the programs and activities which take place at Levels. The planning board meets every other Friday and anyone can become a member by attending three consecutive meetings thus demonstrating his or her commitment to take responsibility and actively participate. Program participants carry much of the responsibility of handling and minimizing problems such as drug and alcohol use within the facility and have been very successful. Vandalism is non-existent. Participants who have been disciplined by staff have a right to a hearing before a "peer court".

The Director feels that incorporating the direct input of participants has important program implications. Young people feel respected and important and by entering into policy discussions they learn to take responsibility and to work together for the good of the larger group. Programs and events planned in this manner better reflect the needs, trends and tastes of the age group of those involved. Built into the programming is an implicit trust in the natural ability of young people. Levels operates in a way that attempts to maximize the learning potential of an age group that often resents being told what to do and how to live their lives. At Levels, young people can take on increasing degrees of responsibility, learn from experience and take pride in the outcome. Kids are encouraged to get involved and take risks. The supportive environment enhances the potential for learning and personal growth.

According to the Director of Levels successful implementation of the program rests with the expertise of the Levels' staff, which is the single most important feature of the program. The staff are not only expert in their own fields but also in knowing when to step back and when to step in. The Library Director is careful not to undercut staff by becoming too actively involved in the program and restricts his activities to budget matters and outside problems. This division of labor allows the youth workers to spend their time working with program participants rather than with paper. The staff also visit the four local middle schools, two senior high schools and several parochial schools on an informal basis once a week to a talk about the Levels program, meet new kids and reinforce old contacts.

The program is completely funded by the library and the current operating budget is set at $125,000. The budget covers all staff salaries and supplies. Utilities and maintenance are covered under the library budget. There is no charge to the 300 regular and 250 occasional users for any of the activities and services provided by Levels. Equal numbers of males and females participate in program activities. Approximately 35 to 50 students are in attendance on any given day. At least two staff members are present at all

times. During the school year, the program operates from 3:00 PM to 10:00 PM Mondays through Wednesdays and from 3:00 pm to midnight on Fridays, and 6:00 PM to midnight on Saturdays. Summer hours are Monday through Wednesday 6:30 PM to 10:30 PM and from 7:00 PM to midnight on Friday and Saturdays. The facility is closed on Thursdays and Sundays.

Organized activities at Levels are usually of three types: workshops, weekend events, and theatrical productions.

- Workshops: Workshops are usually conducted on weekday afternoons by staff members or "peer teachers", young people who are especially skilled in certain areas. Workshops include music, crafts, humanities, yoga, dance, modelling, video and computer programming. Classes in directing, karate, aerobics, art, and self-awareness programs such as a presentation on adolescent alienation and suicide are also frequently offered. In addition, ongoing activities are scheduled including softball and production of a bimonthly program newsletter.

- Weekend Events: Weekend events take many forms and invariably include some kind of live music or entertainment, such as local rock, jazz or other musical group and variety shows created by young entertainers. Films are frequently shown. For example, the critically acclaimed film El Norte was given two showings under joint sponsorship with the Hispanic American Committee. While adults and teens were viewing the feature film, younger children were shown spanish language versions of children's classics.

- Theatrical Productions: Theatrical Productions which average eight to ten a year are open to the public and attract capacity audiences (about 175). Both well-known plays and those written by the Levels' Theatre Workshop are produced. Theatre is used as a means of teaching young people how to work together, and the participants handle all phases of the production, including direction, casting, staging, sound, video taping, choreography, lighting, music and publicity, which includes printing program books and selling advertising space to local merchants to raise money for the production. All productions are essentially self-supporting with participants raising between $300 to $500 per production. Television workshops are also given and Levels has produced its own programs on the library's cable TV channel including monthly half-hour video productions and live coverage of weekend events.

The Director feels that the Theatrical Productions have been the most consistently successful vehicle for nurturing teens' growth potential. Shows are initiated by one person or a group, who decide they want to assume responsibility for a productions. They go to the planning board which will either recommend that the production go ahead or that additional participants be brought in to assist in the project. Occasionally, the planning board will decide that a person lacks sufficient experience to take full responsibility and recommends that they assist on another production. If a production is accepted, a staff person is assigned as 'staff contact' to meet regularly with

the production group to remind them of deadlines, to discuss problems and to make suggestions but all final decisions are left to the teens. The productions also provide opportunities for interaction among different age groups with the older youths acting as role models for the younger ones, or in some instances a younger teen will be found directing high school seniors.

In its thirteen years of existence Levels has established itself as the one place in the community where young people from a variety of backgrounds and ages have been able to meet, to learn from each other and work together. Thousands of participants have become adults, many of whom return to visit and help. One of the most valuable aspects of Levels is the interaction between young people and the staff. Critical to this interaction is the atmosphere of respect and warmth among members. Youth are trusted to learn by experience and assisted by professionals who act as supportive consultants and mentors, rather than project supervisors. Levels is especially successful in involving young people who have not previously participated in social activities. The preoccupation, competitiveness and stress experienced by many youths attending Levels with getting good grades, good jobs and getting ready for college is tempered by the strong bonds of trust and support formed between staff and participants.

As an alumnus of Levels wrote to the staff, "... all the staff members take every kid under their wing and each child, when necessary, is treated to a one-to-one relationship. I know I have been helped enormously with my personal and social problems. All I can say is Thanks Levels". A six year program veteran states, "....the strongest aspect of Levels is as a memberless community.... you become a member by walking in the door... and by your interest and commitment...there are no other criteria." "Levels gives kids an opportunity to create and learn in a low pressure atmosphere...kids are encouraged to reach as far as they can imagine.....its O.K. to fail at Levels... you won't be judged a failure as a person... nor prohibited from trying again...".

Sunnyside Center
9th Street and Ingalls Avenue
P.O. Box 1410
Troy, New York 12180

Sunnyside Center, which has been in operation since the early 1960s, is a neighborhood drop-in center whose goal is to provide after school and summer programs for low income young people which support and enhance life options. The center employees also are advocates and service coordinators for participating families and provide referral services when necessary.

Sunnyside was established 25 years ago by the Catholic Diocese of Albany and is currently funded by the Catholic Charities, the New York State Department of Youth and the United Way. Seventy percent of operating funds are derived from non-public sources. The Center serves an area that is largely minority and low income. Forty to fifty percent of area residents are unemployed and single parent families. Sixty percent of program participants are Black or hispanic; 40% are white. Almost all children come from families on AFDC. The program estimates that it served 60% to 65% of the total eligible population during the last program year. In 1986, approximately 300 children and youths used the center; 150 were registered participants, the remainder were occasional or drop-in users.

The Center program is coed and serves "at risk" children and youth, youth on probation and children with emotional and other adjustment problems. Hours during the school year for the 5 to 13 year old group are 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM; for the 13 to 17 year olds the Center is open from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM or 9:00 PM. Summer program hours are from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Participants are charged fifty cents per school year for registration and there is a summer donation of $15.00 per family. The Center publicizes its activities by posters in local schools and stores and sends flyers home with participants.

The current staff, excluding summer staff and administrators, consists of 5 professionals and approximately 22 volunteers including two senior aides, 3 to 5 grandmothers and 15 college students. Paid staff must be at least 18 years old, drug free and approved by the registry. They must be willing to participate in monthly in-service training and have good rapport with the participants and other staff.

Sunnyside provides after school and evening programs to "at risk" children and youth who have nowhere to go after school. This youth and family center provides academic, recreational and family strengthening programs. Academic tutoring and homework assistance are built into the program day, as well as a variety of activities including arts and crafts, cooking, and recreational sports. Although there are no established teams, informal teams are formed to play basketball, baseball and soccer on an outdoor court and a large blacktop area. The center has three acres of grassy land with swings, sandboxes, etc. During the summer, the program is largely recreational and an outdoor pool is available.

The Center also conducts self-esteem groups for youths with adjustment

problems and an anti-delinquency program led by a family worker who meets with both the youth and the family to work on issues of social deviance, emotional or other adjustment problems. This worker also visits families in the area which appear to be having problems coping or whose children are truant. Attempts are made to address the problem directly or if necessary, referrals are made to area services. For area families, the Center runs a Thrift Shop, a food assistance program, and provides classes in parenting instruction and family budgeting

The Center staff have excellent cooperative relationships with the teachers at the three local elementary schools in the area and with the Doyle Middle School. The school district provides the Center with information necessary for its anti-juvenile delinquency program and the tutoring program. Sunnyside also works very closely with the Northeast Troy Neighborhood Association, with Juvenile Probation and is involved in the Probation Employment Program, which places students in positions at the center. Center staff also are available to accompany Sunnyside families to court appearances.

Sunnyside is not a licensed after school care facility since it lacks the funds required to establish the necessary staff child ratios and cannot meet the high cost of liability insurance. The center therefore operates on a drop-in basis only, without accountability to parents for their children's attendance. A major barrier to increasing the number of low income children participating is the dangerous area in which Sunnyside is located. Children who could walk to the Center because they live close by are fearful of using the streets even during the daylight hours. The program also finds it difficult to get families to complete the Center's registration forms. The families are "gun shy" when it comes to signing their names on anything. They are also afraid to ask for help as they feel that the few benefits they do receive might be taken from them. These families often wait until things get desperate before coming for help.

The Center would like to expand its programming to serve more area youth but is hampered by funding and staffing problems and the costs of liability insurance. Some expansion did take place in September, 1986 when an annex for nursery school children was opened on the Sunnyside campus by the Seaton Center.

Fun Clubs
Boys and Girls Club of Binghamton
257 Washington Street
Binghamton, NY 13901
(607) 723-7404

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Binghamton conduct four after school programs- "Fun Clubs". One is in the Boys and Girls Club facility and is free to members. Existing staff and program offerings provide most of the daily activities. Free busing is also provided for participants; the program is monitored by the Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors. The other three "Fun Clubs" are located in public schools. Two, located at the Wilson and Horace Mann schools charge $15.00 per week on a sliding fee scale. The school facilities are provided at no charge and the parent-teacher organization at each school monitors program activities.

Funding for the programs comes from the United Way and the Broome County Child Development Program. The Boys and Girls Club has an annual operating budget of $487,000.

The Fun Club, located at the Franklin School, Conklin Avenue, Binghamton New York, is an after-school care program for fifty, 6 to 12 year olds (out of a potential population of 21,000) as well as a work experience program site for a group of teens who take care of the younger children. The programs mission is to create a positive youth development environment for teens considered at risk and younger children in need of after school care. Franklin School was selected as the site for the program because it serves a population which ranks high on a variety of social risk indicators. A school-age child care needs assessment indicated that 57% of the parents responding were not home after school for their children.

The Franklin "Fun Club" after school program operates from 2:30 PM to 6:00 PM five days a week during the school year and serves a low to middle income population that is 80% white and 20% Black. The program provides an opportunity for children to broaden their learning experience through creative activities such as music, arts and crafts, structured and non-structured recreational activities and academic tutoring. A snack is provided each day. The Club also has the resources to transport youngsters to special events. No fees are charged since a state grant covers program costs. Two full time professionals, one teen coordinator, one volunteer and 20 teens work at the "Fun Club". The Franklin program is monitored by an advisory committee. The goals of the after school program are:

- to provide a safe environment after school for children who would otherwise be alone at home.
- to programmatically enrich the child's time after school.
- to create a vehicle for interagency initiation, creation and support of the program effort.

The Teen-Aide component of the program was established in 1983 to integrate "at risk youths" into the school-age child care program through a grant from the State Division of Youth. The objectives of the Teen-Aide Program are:

. to provide life skills oriented experiences through the use of teacher role models who will, by example, demonstrate appropriate job (child caring) behavior.

. to provide education in the areas of parenting, stages of child development, and job and performance expectations.

Prior to selection as a Teen-Aide, prospective participants are required to engage in 36 hours of initial training in communications skills, listening skills, principles of expressive play, child development, first aid and activity planning. After the assignment begins, the teens are required to attend a once a week training session and work at the center twice a week. Each teen participant is assigned to a work group under the supervision of the program leader and teen coordinator. Work group tasks include creating a curriculum and performing program activities as well as developing relationships with the school age children under their care. The teens work an average of 95 hours during the program year and are paid $3.35 per hour.

During 1985, four areas of the Teen aide's behavior were recorded to determine the program's impact. Three of the four areas were presented to the Teen-Aides as factors that would keep the youth in the program: school attendance, grades, program activities, and continued employment during the summer months. The following results were collected from data on seven teens working in the program:

.School Attendance - all seven teens maintained an average of 90% legal attendance in their high school.

.Grades - Five teens improved their grades, one teen remained the same and one teen's average dropped significantly.

.Continued Employment - All seven teens found summer employment, five in a summer recreation program where they became senior counselors as a result of their experience in the after school program.

The advantages of using adolescents in a school age child care program are many. A well conceptualized program involving teens permits the adolescent to become a resource for the community. Instead of "hanging out" these young people are placed in situations where they can both be of use and feel useful. Working with younger children under supervision enables these teens to share specific skills and hobbies and increases the adolescent's self esteem and confidence in their own abilities. Additional benefit for the after school care program is that the presence of the Teen-Aides permits lower staff child ratios and increases the amount of individual attention the younger children receive, thereby improving the quality of the care provided.

The Friendly Place, El Sitio Sympatico
Metro North
101st Street and First Avenue
New York, New York

The Friendly Place, in Spanish, El Sitio Sympatico, is a place where young people and their families can come to borrow or buy books that are fun to read or are informative. It serves as a way to introduce good books to prospective readers in a low-income, minority neighborhood. A major goal of the program is to saturate the area with literacy.

The Friendly Place was established in 1981 with funds from the Department of Education. It was planned as a four-year project at a funding level of $62,000 a year. At the end of the first year, when the Friendly Place had barely opened its doors, the federal government announced that support would end in June, 1982. Since then, the Friendly Place has looked for support from other sources. The program operates out of a double storefront in Metro North, a housing complex that is within walking distance of five elementary schools and a junior high school. Over sixty youngsters frequent the Friendly Place every day.

The Friendly Place has a number of unique features that sharply differentiate it from the often underused public libraries in the inner-city. The books in this library are all paperback, eliminating the expense of hard cover books and avoiding having the youths associate the books with school and failure. The Friendly Place displays its collection with the covers facing outward on racks reaching from the floor to adult eye level, similar to the way books are displayed in a drug store. Books are grouped by genre - mysteries, romances, biographies, etc., and are shelved in each group according to difficulty in reading. The easiest books are at floor level, and the most difficult are on the top. This system spares those whose reading is below grade level the embarrassment of looking for a book in a section marked, "Easy Readers." Library cards are not taken home by borrowers at The Friendly Place. Instead they are kept on file by the desk, thus eliminating the possibility of lost cards. Unlike the public library, only one book can be borrowed at a time, until the reader has shown responsibility and caring towards books. In addition, there are no fines for late returns, but no other book is issued until a person has returned the one borrowed previously. Under this system, the rate of return is over 90 percent. This library does not ask or expect youngsters to be silent-- often a situation associated with school and punishment. Rather, it encourages them to relax and enjoy the surroundings.

The Book and Game Club is a program run by The Friendly Place for older elementary school children. The Club meets on a weekly basis and introduces the youngsters to board games such as checkers, Monopoly and Mastermind. The staff sets up and explains a variety of games and helps some youngsters select books they might especially enjoy. After the Club time, the staff discusses how each child is progressing in terms of number skills, reading level and

behavior. There are plans made for the next activity that might be best suited for each child. In this way the Club is fun and serves as an intervention based on each child's need. In addition to the Book and Game Club, there is an Art Club and a Science Club that meet weekly and focus on these areas of interest.

The Friendly Place has been successful in reaching youngsters and adults in a neighborhood where access to books is limited. It has promoted reading by providing a carefully selected collection of books and a caring staff which is always available to suggest a book, help with a word, or answer a question.

Boys' Club of Memphis
189 South Barksdale Street
Memphis, Tennessee 30104

The "Rodeo" Group Club Program is an after-school day care program, established in 1980, for 8-14 year old boys experiencing adjustment problems. The goal of the program is to help shy, withdrawn or otherwise maladjusted boys to interact with others in appropriate ways in a group setting. It is contracted by the Department of Human Services and funded by the State of Tennessee, the United Way, and civic organizations. The current annual budget is $211,000. Various local agencies and organizations have helped the program by allowing field trips on a reduced fee basis and by providing materials and expertise. The Memphis Interfaith Association supplies food for the program at $.10 a pound. The clubs operate out of two Boys' Club facilities in Memphis, Tennessee and serve 180 minority, mostly black, inner city, Title XX/SSBG eligible boys. They are open from 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM, after school, and 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM in the summer, but arrangements can be made for boys to remain until 9:00 PM during the summer months if needed. Attendance is required, and a follow-up phone call is made to families of club members who are absent. Program fees are on a sliding scale.

Each "Rodeo" Group Club program is comprised of six group clubs each with 10-12 "cowboys" and a "top hand" (staff member). A social service worker places the boys in a particular group based on age, maturity, and attitude. Various types of personalities are placed together to develop a well-rounded group. At the inception of group clubs, club members help plan by deciding on the number of clubs to be established, and possible names and goals for the clubs. The boys also decided on how often to meet and for what length of time. Most activities are planned by the "Rodeo" members and in almost all instances these are supported by the "Top Hand". The overall rate of participation (attendance) in club activities is 92%. Twenty seven cultural and individual goals were designed including completing a group club flag, completing projects in four educational areas (arts and crafts, woodshop, library, science) and physical fitness.

A typical day begins with "chow call" (afternoon snack), after which the boys break into their own special groups (Mustangs, Broncos, Ramrods, etc.) under the leadership of their "Top Hands". They participate in group and individual activities such as homework help, tutoring, computer lab, arts and crafts, and woodworking. Several times a day, "round-ups" are called where members participate in special activities. The game room and gym are available to the boys as are special classes sponsored by the Boys' Club. Field trips are planned on a regular basis.

The Rodeo Club has an Advisory Committee comprised of parents of the boys in the program. The parents meet on a quarterly basis and decide the kinds of program activities that might be most beneficial to the boys. In this way they encourage long-range, multi-faceted projects to make the club time more meaningful.

The Rodeo Club members share facilities and activities with other Boys'

Club members. This factor, combined with the attractive Western theme helps remove the stigma of day care for young adolescent boys. The clubs were established to meet the need for a supportive, enriching program for boys experiencing difficulty at home and in school. They provide supervised after-school day care for inner city boys who could not find similar services in their neighborhood. Many of the youth involved who would otherwise engage in delinquent activities no longer feel they have the need to do so. The clubs have fostered a sense of accomplishment and an increased sense of self worth. The staff believes that the clubs have been successful because they are "the most inclusive clubs in town-the place where everybody is somebody."

Challengers Boys and Girls Club
5029 S. Vermont Avenue
P.O. Box 37107
Los Angeles, California 90037
(213) 971-6161

Challengers was founded in 1968 in response to the social, educational and recreational needs of young boys in South-Central Los Angeles. The program became a charted member of the Boys Clubs of America in 1974. Initially, club meetings were held in local parks until a room was donated to the program in 1969. In 1970, the Von's Grocery Company donated an unused 22,000 sq. ft. market building to the Club. Extensive and continuous renovations over the past 19 years have created a multi-purpose facility which includes a gymnasium, library, and space for arts and crafts, graphic arts, theatre arts, photography, etc. Two satellite programs at local elementary schools offering after school enrichment for youth six to twelve years of age were opened in 1985. These programs operate in bungalows on the school grounds and are made available at no cost to the program.

Challengers' primary goals are delinquency prevention and the promotion of optimal social development of low-income, male and female youth ages 6 to 17 by providing constructive alternatives through a comprehensive program of educational, cultural, leadership, social and recreational activities. The main facility is located in a predominately Black neighborhood with a growing Latino population. Ninety-five percent of the youth are Black and 5% are Hispanic. Sixty percent of the members come from single parent households; 25% from families receiving some form of public assistance.

The Club operates Monday through Friday afternoons from 2:30 PM to 8:00 PM during the school year and is open all day during school holidays and vacations and the summer. One after school enrichment program at the Cienega Elementary School operates Monday through Thursday from 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM; the other at South Park Elementary School operates three days per week (Tuesday through Thursday) from 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM. Program outreach is mainly by word of mouth.

Club members at all three sites can choose from a large range of activities designed to promote positive attitudes, self-esteem and good peer relationships. Athletics including an annual Sports Day featuring well known athletes, arts and crafts, photography, cultural activities and a daily rap session are included in the well-rounded program. Homework assistance, tutoring, work experience and guidance counseling are an important part of the program. Special interest clubs such as drama, a girls' club and for older youths, the Keystone Club which encourages citizenship and leadership development are also available. All Club members are expected to attend a study hall to complete their homework before they engage in other activities. Time in the program is structured in 40 minute blocks similar to high school scheduling. Snacks are provided but no meals are served during the afternoon sessions. The main facility is centrally located and within walking distance of both an elementary and junior high school. Parents pick participants up at the end of the day. Beyond the homework requirement participants are

encouraged to plan their own daily activities. The program is offered on an enrollment only basis and is accountable to parents. Participants must check in and out and parents are immediately notified if a Club member does not attend.

Older teens may also participate in a job development program which operates two days a week from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM. The program stresses job readiness skills including how to fill out a job application, how to conduct a job interview and how to write a resume. Parents and some Board members conduct mock job interviews with participants. These interviews are videotaped and provide important feedback to the youth who can "see" their progress from initial nervousness to competence. The summer youth employment program funded by JTPA is very popular. Teens must volunteer for the program, participate in the six week job readiness program and demonstrate their competence before they are selected. There is active competition to excel and become a "supervisor". The drawing card for this position is both the recognition and the higher hourly wages ($6.00 to $7.00 per hour). One measure of the success of the summer employment program is the number of 10 to 12 year olds who say they want to work at the Club when they reach age 14. The Challengers Creative Service program provides specialized services to youth ages 10 to 17 referred from the Juvenile Justice System, Probation Department, the Los Angeles Police Department, school and other human service agencies.

Parents are deeply involved in the program. The Club has a mandatory parent orientation which they must attend if their child is to participate in the program. Parents are expected to volunteer four hours per month to program activities and are expected to attend monthly parent meetings with their children. In addition to guest speakers who are frequently invited, the meetings include small group sessions with parents, children and staff members and are used to discuss a large range of issues and foster parent child communication. The turnout for the monthly meetings is higher than comparable school PTA meetings. Each of the three program sites sponsor a parents' softball team and intersite competitions are held. The program works hard at making sure that parents are part of the process. Initially parents are brought in by their children through the orientation requirement which enables parents to become familiar with the program and staff. The varied opportunities for parental involvement in program activities and with other parents in athletic and social events helps ensure continued parental contact and commitment. Parents coordinate special fund raising events including field trips, a fashion show and a pancake breakfast. They also assist in a variety of club activities during the week. Parent volunteers provide tutoring, homework assistance, leadership development seminars, and teach computer programming, drama and dance.

The Club which began with 12 participants in 1968 now has a membership of over 1,500 youth who pay a $12.00 annual membership fee, which does not appear to constrain participation. Average daily attendance during the school year is over 200 youth which grows to 300 to 400 during the summer. One of the school sites serves 125 participants, the other site serves 65. Challengers employs 8 full-time staff including a full-time education director and 9 part-time professionals. Staff child ratios depend on the type of activity but attempts are made to adhere to a 1:20 or 1:25 ratio. Staff in the satellite

programs must meet Department of Education degree requirements or have the equivalent experience in similar settings. Other program staff must be knowledgeable about the community and have at least two years experience working in community based organizations. The staff is racially mixed and includes Hispanics, Blacks and whites.

The program has a diversified funding base and does not rely on any single source of funds. The Club is a member agency of United Way and also receive funds from local private foundations, community groups, corporations and individuals, who are asked to make a years commitment to supporting the program. The Board of Directors is well connected and actively participates in raising funds from a broad range of contributors. Challengers' Creative Service program is funded by the Community Development Department of the City of Los Angeles.

One measure of the success of the Challengers program is the length of time participants remain involved in the program. It is not unusual for youth who enter the program at age six to remain until age 15 to 17. The program also has an active alumnae group whose children are now active club members.

Boys Harbor, Inc.
Harbor School Age Center
1230 Fifth Avenue at 104 Street
New York, New York 10029

Boys Harbor, Inc. was founded in 1937 to send inner-city youngsters to sleep-away camp. Today this multi-faceted organization continues to offer the coed Sleep-Away Camp in East Hampton for youngsters 6-13 years old; a Performing Art Center providing drama, dance, instrumental and choral music for three year olds through adult; a career counseling program for teens ages 13 to 15; Science Talent Search for high school seniors interested in pursuing a science career, and a school-age child care program. This last program component was instituted in 1971 and currently serves 187 predominantly Black and Hispanic 6 to 14 year olds. There are 50 youngsters waiting for places at the center. The program operates 5 days a week after school from 3:00 PM to 6:30 PM, while the holiday and summer schedule is 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM. The Agency for Child Development funds the program and sets the fees based on a sliding scale up to $40.00 per week. Membership in Boys Harbor ($15.00 per year) is required and additional special offerings are available for a fee of $15.00 for a once a week, month long class. Classes for 9 to 11 year olds include animal dissection, chorus, mime and body magic.

The goal of the Harbor School Age Center is to provide an educational environment during after-school hours through numerous workshop offerings. The staff offers their expertise and challenges the creative flair of children through discovery of and participation in arts and crafts, drama, film making, writing, photography, science, and music and dance. Tutorial help, recreational sports, team sports, and swimming are also available at the center.

The program is divided into junior (6-9) and senior (10-14) divisions to best meet the developmental needs of each age group. Each 16 week program for a junior child is determined by the staff, with an understanding of the importance of a variety of activities, and the inclusion of certain basic skills on a weekly basis. As the youngsters mature, they are given more choices, but staff members remain involved in directing them to particular areas of interest and need.

The daily program consists of a large group meeting followed by small group one- or two-hour workshops. Attendance is taken daily, and a follow-up phone call is made to the families of absentees. Parents receive written information prior to enrolling their child as well as reminder letters that irregular attendance will lead to dismissal from the program.

All staff at the Harbor School Age Center are licensed elementary or secondary teachers or are degreed specialists in their areas of interest. The 22 teachers work along with assistant teachers who must have at least two years of college experience. The staff, as well as the funding agency, evaluate the program on a yearly basis.

Bernadette Edwards, the director of the senior division, believes that the

Harbor School Age Center works effectively for the early adolescent population because the staff give the older youngsters increasing responsibility in developing and implementing the programs. Youngsters are able to choose their areas of interest and spend time working on meaningful projects. Activities do not duplicate the content and teaching methods used during the school day. Youngsters are able to try out adult roles by helping in the office or assisting with the care of the younger children. Students evaluate the course offerings and often see their suggestions become reality. In these ways the Harbor School Age Center meets the complex and challenging needs of its 10 to 14 year old population.

Black Male Youth Health Enhancement Project
Family Life center
Shiloh Baptist Church
1510 Ninth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20001
(202) 232-4200

The Male Youth Project (MYP), established in the summer of 1986, is directed at addressing problems faced by young black men in assuming responsible roles in contemporary society. Further impetus for the program are the alarming statistics which show black males to be at higher risk for poor health status than black females or white males and females. MYP is designed to encourage participants to develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through knowledge, attitude and behavior changes. The project achieves its goals through a broad range of educational, cultural, recreational, and spiritual activities.

MYP is a comprehensive, year round program designed to assist young men, ages 11 to 17, in their transition from boyhood to manhood. The program began with about 5 youths in September, 1986 and now has 20 boys in regular daily attendance; an additional 30 participants are served on a less regular basis. The Director estimates that between 50 and 100 young black males are currently served by the program. Participants must be residents of Shiloh neighborhood. The young men come from low income, predominantly female headed households and are most likely to be D or D+ students lacking educational motivation. The common attitude among participants is that it is not smart to be smart and academic success is not a high priority for these youth. The inner city neighborhood in which the program operates is considered to be an open air drug market and very dangerous. Once the teens enter the facility after school they normally do not leave until the end of the program day and doors are locked to prevent unauthorized entry.

MYP is jointly sponsored by The Family Life Center of the Shiloh Church and the District of Columbia Department of Human Resources, Commission of Public Health. The program is funded by the Ford Foundation and the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation and the Commission of Public Health. MYP is housed in the Family Life Center, a $5 million health facility, which has its own restaurant, sauna, weight room, gymnasium, basketball court, etc. This large, well-equipped facility is especially suitable for the MYP program since it has the space to accommodate a large range of activities, activities which provide constructive outlets for the high energy level of young males involved. The staff of MYP consists of the Director, an office manager/secretary, and two part-time counselors.

MYP is open Monday through Thursday from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM; weekends are used for Field Trips. The daily schedule Monday through Thursday begins with free time from 3:00 PM to 3:30 PM; study hall/tutorial program from 3:30 PM to 4:30 PM; physical fitness, basketball practice, weekly meeting workshops, etc. from 4:30 PM to 7:00 PM. The program has the use of the gym on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and every other Friday. In order to participate in the program activities participants must have a physical examination, which is

provided free of charge at a local adolescent health clinic.

The major MYP program components include:

. Mentor Program: A group of about 10 men from the Church Board called "Mentors" undertake a range of activities with the boys, provide successful role models and work one on one with participants as needed. The Mentors make weekly presentations with their group of teens and engage in other activities. Projects in the MYP are broken down into smaller units. The 50 youths in MYP are divided into Teams of 16 to 17 and paired with three to five adult Mentors. Each adult is responsible for a maximum of 5 teens whom they call from time to time to make them aware of meetings, plan activities, etc. Individual teams (they use colors to identify themselves) are responsible for coordinating some type of field trip each month and the monthly team presentations. Recently, the Blue Team organized a visit to an exhibit for Black History Week. The Teams have also arranged overnight camping trips.

. Basketball Team: The most attractive feature of the program for the teens is the basketball team. Youth served by this program are not inclined to want to come and listen to someone speak so workshops are not a big drawing card. Instead these adolescents need action oriented activities where they can run, jump, play and not get too serious unless its on an interpersonal level. The Basketball Team is so important to these kids that it can be used as a bargaining chip. For example, the Team wanted uniforms and this became an important way for the program to encourage responsibility and to teach the teens that they can not simply get their mothers to buy them whatever they want. The Director feels that many of these teens have been spoiled in their single parent female headed households and have learned to pressure and manipulate their mothers, who give in to their sons perhaps more then fathers would. Although project funds were available for the uniforms and mothers most likely would have purchased the uniforms despite the fact that many were struggling to make ends meet, the Director decided to organize a raffle and limit family purchases to no more than 5 tickets. The teens objected strenuously but they did sell the tickets and bought the uniforms which are still used today. The project has also found that Basketball is also a good way to bring in older boys on an ongoing basis which is difficult given other neighborhood "attractions."

. Study Hall/Tutorial Program: The program requires attendance at study hall. While teens do have choices in the program, these choices are made within the program structure and do have consequences. For example, if participants do not come to study hall they may not go on to basketball practice and if they do not attend practice they can not play in the games. The Director has established a relationship with the local elementary and junior high school which send him the youths' report cards. This permits him to monitor the teens' homework to some extent. If a participant reports that he doesn't have homework and yet is doing poorly in school the staff can apply some pressure to encourage better study habits. Although the program is not staffed to do a great deal of one on one tutoring, teens are give some help with their academics.

. Weekly Meeting: Meeting workshops take place from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM every Wednesday and involve three to five men and 15 to 17 youth. The Team gets together and develops a presentation. Each team is responsible for one Wednesday per month and program staff present on last Wednesday. During February the Team presentations were on some aspect of Black History. These presentations are used to develop various skills, such as getting teens used to talking in front of people in a safe environment and doing some research on a selected topic. Workshops are also used for general meeting purposes to discuss program business. Workshop topics have included drug abuse, sexuality, nutrition, etc. The Director has a background in sexuality related issues and has made several presentations on this topic. When the program was just getting started during the summer he used a film festival on sex education and refreshments to attract new participants. The teens quickly identified the Director with sex education and still ask what sex film he is planning to show for staff presentations. The program is increasingly bringing in outside experts on health related topics, including the Red Cross for First Aid training and CPR, etc.

MYP also publishes a monthly calendar and a quarterly newsletter. The Director hopes to get to where the teens can do the entire newsletter on their own including writing editing, typing, etc.

Weekends are used for Field Trips which range from academic and cultural, to recreational and spiritual. MYP teens have been to professional Basketball games; overnight camping trips, museums and church. On two different Sundays the youth from MYP went to Shiloh and participated in the services. During Spring Break some 300 to 400 youth and adults will attend a conference on the Health of Black Males. There will also be a Basketball Tournament. In keeping with the bargaining chip model, Teams wishing to participate in the Tournament will have to attend the conference.

MYP provides high risk youths with a safe environment in an unsafe neighborhood from the time school ends until their working parents return home. In addition, the program offers a vital and productive use of time and positive male role models in the lives of teens who do not have many to choose from. Both the church mentors and the staff provide participants with a sense of how males can fill different and successful adult roles.

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